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ON THE COVER Built-in colonnades are original in this 1915 stone bungalow.
PHOTO BY DAN MAYERS. SEE PAGE 20.

Historic Preservation Month



HISTORIC PRESERVATION MONTH OLDHOUSE JOURNAL MAY 2023

PRESERVATION IS A STRONG THEME in this issue. The magnificent and unique “house that Teco built” (p. 52) looks virtually the same as when it was new, thanks to heroic efforts by a preservation-minded owner and architect. A house by Colonial Revival architect Royal Barry Wills, well-preserved by its designer-owner today, gets a sympathetic kitchen that complements the house rather than following today’s trends (p. 60). The owners of the 1732 farmhouse (p. 66) not only preserved the structure but also added period garden rooms and outbuildings.

Our RESTORE article on flooring repairs emphasizes salvaging what is already there. As always, preservation of a streetscape and neighborhood is addressed, albeit with gallows humor, on the “Remuddling” page.

Every May, with the National Trust leading the way, preservation groups, historical societies, and related businesses bring focus to our country’s diverse heritage by celebrating National Historic Preservation Month. At a national level, coverage usually extends to civic projects, Main Street revitalization, Congressional tax initiatives, and state programs. We think that individual homeowners, however, deserve credit for a major, collective impact. It is the long-term, ongoing, privately financed rescue of millions of houses over many decades that preserves buildings, neighborhoods, and towns so that history may be read in three dimensions.

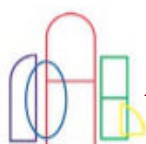


Since our first tissue, in 1973, OHJ’s coverage of DIY conservation and repair, historical design, and period-inspired work has fostered a steady praise of old houses—as embodied energy, as a tangible record of the past, and as an opportunity to live with history and maintain the local sense of place. This month, we step up coverage through social media and exclusive web content, with the participation of like-minded sponsors. Take time to walk around your historic districts or stay at a historic hotel. Learn about the National Trust and its programs at savingplaces.org

Christine

For more information, visit
oldhouseonline.com/web-exclusives/historic-preservation-month

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SIDE NOTES

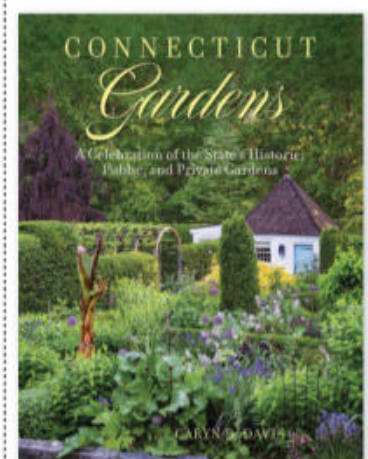
GARDENS PUBLIC & PRIVATE

The farmhouse garden story (p. 66) was photographed and written by Caryn B. Davis, who has a new photography book coming this month: *Connecticut Gardens, A Celebration of the State’s Historic, Public, and Private Gardens*. It’s a treat for New Englanders and for anyone interested in garden history, site plans, and landscape traditions.

Davis photographed simple cottage gardens as well as formal landscapes and everything in between. Properties date from First Period into the 20th century. Most of the gardens shown were created by “passionate amateurs,” but you’ll also see designs by Frederick Law Olmsted, Beatrix Farrand, and even English garden designer Gertrude Jekyll (the garden at Glebe House in Woodbury). Old houses of course make an appearance throughout.

Stories are told in entertaining text by Chris Lawrie; the benefits of public gardens are lauded. A visitor’s guide to public gardens is included.

CONNECTICUT GARDENS,
by Caryn B. Davis
(Globe Pequot, 2023);
hardcover and Kindle editions.





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What's on the Floor

Finishes for the hardest working surface in the house. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

1. PEACOCK BRIGHT

Calamus is a hand-chopped mosaic composed of nearly 20 colors of marble and other fine stones, including metallics that produce an iridescent sheen. It's laid in a repeating scallop or peacock pattern. All mosaics are made to measure; price on request. New Ravenna, (757) 442-3379, newravenna.com

2. COLOR AND LIGHT

The Greek Deco floorcloth from the Dresser collection features an intricate pattern of decorative ornaments and diamond sunbursts in a palette that produces a shimmering effect. The floorcloth is highly durable, easy to clean, and hypoallergenic; \$50 per sq. ft. Ariel Grace Design, (503) 206-2631, arielgracedesign.com

3. CLEAN WOOD FLOORS

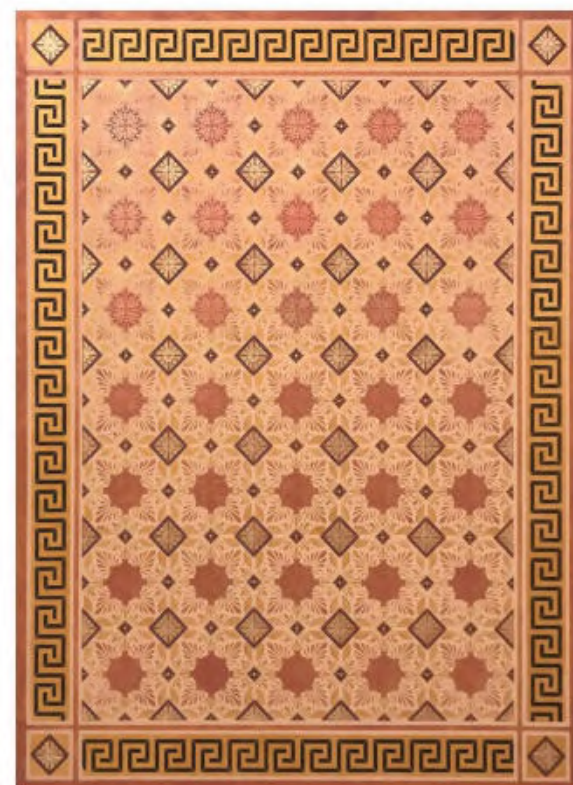
Newly introduced, Wood-N-Floors quickly and safely removes dirt and grime from hardwood floors. Derived from plant-based surfactants, the water-based, residue-free formula is also safe for vinyl, luxury vinyl, laminate, and engineered-wood floors. A one-quart spray bottle is about \$12. Howard Products, (800) 266-9545, howardproducts.com

4. ANYWHERE TILE

Viva is a line of vitreous, unglazed porcelain tile similar to 19th-century geometric and encaustic tiles. The colorful geometrics work in high-traffic areas, freeze-thaw environments, and wet surface conditions. Field tile: about \$13.50 to \$19 per sq. ft. Heritage Tile, (888) 387-3280, heritagetile.com



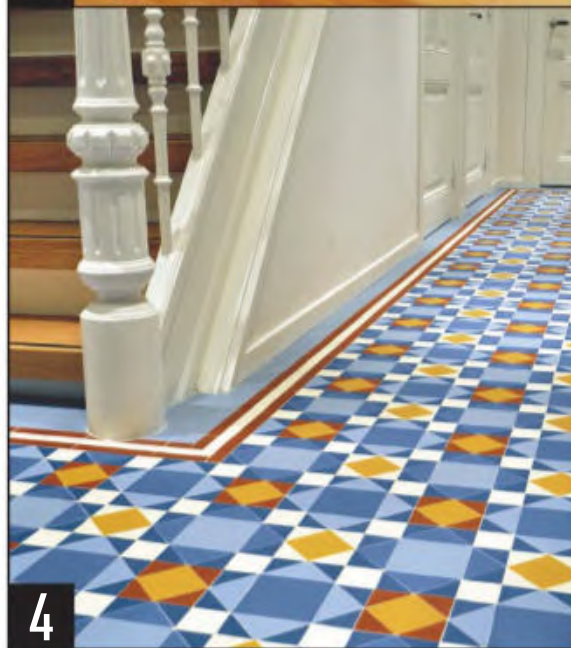
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6



7

5. NOW WATERPROOF

Marmoleum CinchLoc Seal panels create a floating-floor collection—newly waterproof. Easy to install and easy-care, true linoleum panels are 12" x 36". Tiles (12" sq.) available, too. In over two dozen colors: \$5.99 to \$6.25 per sq. ft. Forbo, (800) 842-7839, forbo.com/flooring/en-us/

6. SUBTLE HUES IN STONE

Quarried in New England, natural cleft-face slate in 12" squares is an ideal surfacing material for mudroom and foyer floors as well as patios and hearths. Colors include green, dark green, grey-black, and mottled purple. Cost is \$12 to \$16 per sq. ft. Sheldon Slate Products, (207) 997-3615, sheldonslate.com

7. TRUE OF HEART

Legacy Heart Pine Vintage is a precision-engineered flooring reclaimed from beams up to 30' long. The select-face solid heart-pine top layer is 4mm thick and may be sanded up to three times in the future. Unfinished, square-edge flooring: \$13.45 to \$14.95 per sq. ft. Goodwin, (800) 336-3118, heartpine.com



8



10

8. TULIPS ON IVORY

The Rennie Tulip rug nods to the Glasgow School designs of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Margaret Macdonald. In ivory or sage, the 100%-wool rug is hand-knotted in Nepal. In three sizes, \$6,068 and up. Stickley, (315) 682-5500, stickley.com

9. ALL IN ONE FINISH

Oil Plus 2C is a natural, hard-wax oil finish that colors and protects wood in a single layer. Water- and solvent-free, it forms a molecular bond with wood. The easy-care finish comes in 55 colors. Two-part 1-liter kit: \$73.99. Rubio Monocoat, (844) 937-6862, rubiomonocoatusa.com



9

10. JEWEL OF A ROSE

Just introduced, "The Rose" has an Arts & Crafts motif of stylized roses in shades of green, cabernet, and soft blue, in hand-knotted wool. Available in a full range of sizes; an 8' x 10' rug is \$3,840. The Persian Carpet, (919) 489-8362, persiancarpet.com

Lighting Over Time

Illumination for interiors:
18th century to the present.

1. CLOUD-LIFT SCONCE

The Colorado hook-arm sconce combines a flared, Arts & Crafts lantern shape with Greene & Greene-style cloud-lift overlays and subtle glass accents. It comes in four sizes with a choice of finish, glass, and accent colors: \$731.25 to \$1,441.28. Old California, (800) 577-6679, oldcalifornia.com

2. STREET-LANTERN STYLE

The French Quarter Yoke light is a versatile copper pendant appropriate for styles from Italianate to Tudor Revival. A gas light, it may be electrically lamped for interior use. Sizes range from 14" to 36" high; \$525 to \$1,350. Bevolo, (504) 814-4994, bevolo.com

3. A MINI CHANDELIER

Perfectly sized for a low ceiling, this six-arm chandelier with a weighted center is a smaller version of a hanging lamp made for an early-American ship's cabin. It measures a diminutive 11" wide x 7 1/2" high (excluding hook): \$564. Period Lighting Fixtures, (800) 828-6990, periodlighting.com

4. DECO SILHOUETTE

Martele-style sconces are based on rare 1930s originals from the company's collection. In pewter and with a rotary switch, each comes with a stepped, floral amber shade. Lights measure 13 1/2" tall x 6 1/2" wide; \$650. Vintage Hardware & Lighting, (360) 379-9030, vintagehardware.com

5. FIVE-ARM CHANDELIER

Dripping with crystal trimmings and stem embellishments, the Stella is a reproduction of a ribbed, five-arm, Victorian gaslight chandelier. Finished with hand-polished lacquered brass, the light measures 28" wide x 22" tall. Due to shortages, it's sold without shades: \$1,559. King's Chandelier, (336) 623-6188, chandelier.com



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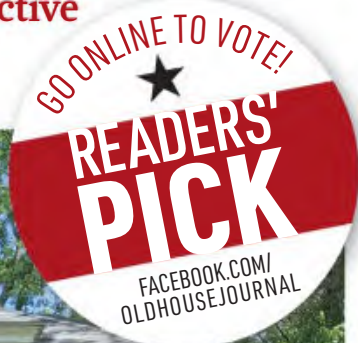
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Charm and character lurk in these distinctive homes built between 1820 and 1938.



Tom Fesmire, Historic Properties, historicproperties.com

ANTIGO, WI / \$230,000

Built by a millionaire, this 1906 hipped-roof American Foursquare is loaded with never-painted Arts & Crafts millwork and built-ins, including an inglenook with fireplace and, in the dining room, two corner china cabinets.



Karl Miller, Karl Miller Realty, karlmillerteam.com

LYNCHBURG, VA / \$189,900

Clad in stucco, this 1924 center-hall Colonial Revival has had partial renovation. Details include the leaded-glass entry, staircase newel, and columned passageways. Original flooring has been partially exposed in the renovated kitchen.



Abbey McCormick, Keller Williams, abbeymccormick.kw.com

MIDDLE GRANVILLE, NY / \$164,900

The brick Dayton-Williams house was built in Federal style ca. 1820. Find a fanlight entry, wide-plank floors, six-panel doors, and four original fireplace mantels.



Stacey Kelly, Century 21 Advantage, 416north2ndstreet.c21.com

RICHMOND, KY / \$259,900

The Mary Turner Hood House is a magnificent example of Italianate style complete with hooded floor-to-ceiling windows and a wrought-iron lacework balcony. Needs interior restoration, but details remaining include ceiling enrichments.



Margaret Duba, Granite Group Realty, newfoundrealestate.com

KINSTON, NC / \$299,900

Centered around a rear courtyard, this Streamline-influenced brick Ranch dates to 1938. Details include prismatic privacy glass at the front door, floor-to-ceiling windows in the sunroom, low-profile Art Deco crown moulding, and period doors and hardware.



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The 1910 house had lost its wraparound verandah and original entry doors. Preservation-approved siding and shingles by James Hardie replaced the disproportionate, mid-20th-century claddings.



A DEFT REFURBISHMENT

With features missing or unsalvageable, the house needed a facelift—in keeping with the architecture. **By Jaclyn Isaac**

I'm an interior designer; my husband, Anthony Frasciello, and I specialize in renovating houses that need a lot of work. We bought this 1910 Free Classic Queen Anne, in Rutherford, New Jersey, and set about recapturing its soul while refreshing the interior for modern living.

At first we hoped to find original elements—such as wood floors and tile. Unfortunately, the house had been altered and poorly maintained so we ended up gutting much of it. The stair balustrade, fireplace brick, and beadboard porch ceiling are original, as is the floor plan.

We worked with architect Rosario Mannino to develop exterior elevations

during the planning phase. The exterior is a restoration but incorporates modern materials. The weatherboard siding and scallop-cut shingles are durable James Hardie products. The trim is from CertainTeed. We replaced the inappropriate entry doors with salvaged Victorian doors from Recycling the Past, in Barnegat, and used vintage hardware from Amighini Architectural, in Jersey City. We rebuilt the traditional porch; here I insisted on using real mahogany for the deck and railings as the material is dense and develops a beautiful patina.

Inside, we accomplished a sensitive renovation. Replacing black-checked

vinyl flooring in the entryway was a decorating splurge: I fell in love with a classic statement tile from Cemento, cement with brass inlay. (It's high maintenance but has great visual impact.) We hoped to save existing wood flooring but found many large holes and missing sections so we replaced it with red oak in four-inch boards. Our tile contractor did an old-school mud job to ensure a flush transition between the tile and the wood flooring. We did open a few walls to create wider pass-throughs but did not change things so much that structural work would be needed.

My artist friend Heather Jozak painted the modern, geometric mural; everyone thinks it's custom wallpaper. I wanted that jolt of modernity, yet it's a totally reversible element should a future owner prefer something more to their liking. In the living room, we added a bump-out for a new gas fireplace and built flanking

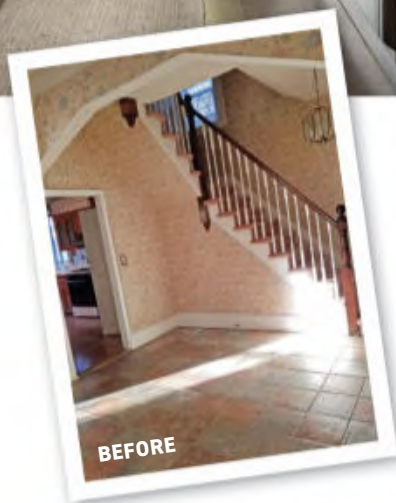


LEFT Base cabinets are classic with a natural wood tone. Upper cabinets are painted in a French-inspired blue-grey that picks up hues in the tile flooring. Countertops are durable SapienStone in Calacatta White.

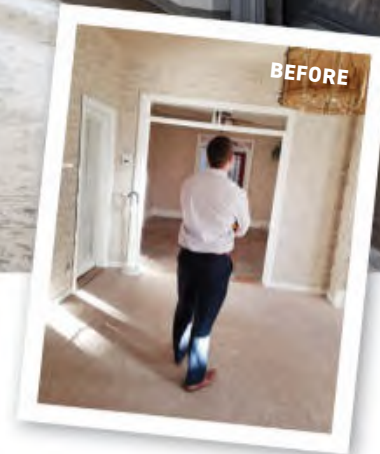


LEFT The hand-painted mural is a modern touch. The original balustrade was restored. The vintage hall light came from a diner in Philadelphia.

INSET The stair hall had been an incoherent mashup with few original details remaining. **RIGHT** In the formerly cramped and dated kitchen, the fireplace stack remains, as it would have been prohibitively expensive to remove it. "I'm not necessarily a fan of full open plan," the designer adds. **BELOW** The dining room was taken down to the studs. Windows and flooring are new. The chandelier is 1950s vintage and the étagère is a Victorian Aesthetic Movement piece that came from an estate sale.



The exterior is a restoration incorporating some modern materials. Inside, the original floor plan was retained in a sensitive renovation that replaced worn and missing elements.



banquettes for built-in seating and storage. To create a line of sight from the entry to the back door, I changed the direction of the living room.

A fireplace stack is in one kitchen wall; had we wanted full open concept, it would have cost thousands of dollars to remove it. We decided to embrace that wall. Instead, we opened a wider pass-through between the dining room and the kitchen and added a massive glass slider door to bring in light.

The kitchen is traditional with a European vibe. Upper cabinets are a French-inspired blue-grey that picks

up tones in the cement-tile flooring. The base cabinets are in a classic (and washable) natural wood finish. Cabinets go to the ceiling to maximize storage without the need for cabinets on every wall. Durable, Italian porcelain countertops are from SapienStone, in Calacatta White.

The house sits on a hill. A makeover of the steep backyard has multiple levels for entertaining even large groups. Easy-maintenance pea gravel (we have two large dogs!) is used in most of the upper-level seating areas.



TOP In the living room, banquettes were built in, flanking the new gas fireplace. **ABOVE LEFT** The vintage doors were salvaged from a Brooklyn brownstone. They came from Recycling the Past, in Barnegat, N.J.

LEFT Owner Anthony Frasciello built the deck and the privacy screen with the help of a friend. It screens a closeup of the neighbor's pool. **RIGHT** The back of the house also got a facelift, as well as a new deck and landscaping.



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DESIGN

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Praise for permanent furniture, from the back cover of Curtis Millworks' 1917 catalog.



20

ORIGINAL BUILT-INS: PERMANENT FURNITURE IN EVERY ERA

A peek at original cabinets, bookcases, buffets, nooks, and benches to inspire the design of built-ins today.



24 VINTAGE VISION

26 THEY STILL MAKE

28 KITCHENS + BATHS

ARTS & CRAFTS

Never was built-in furniture more visible than ca. 1900-1930, the era of the bungalow. Space savers turned up in every room of tiny bungalows. Very fine cabinetwork was built into more exalted houses, especially in the dining room.

In Mill Valley, California, the dining room with its wall of built-ins is original in an uncannily preserved Arts & Crafts Bungalow. **OPPOSITE** (top) This period phone nook is an original that was restored and then relocated to the living room of the 1940 house. (bottom) A window seat is built in as part of the formal woodwork flanking the fireplace in a 1777 house in Massachusetts.



Immovable built-ins are part of the architecture, contributing to the look of the house as much as the staircase or mantel does. They take up less space than standard furniture, especially if they are recessed into walls. They don't need to be moved during cleaning. Built-in furniture is ideal for a small home, whether it's a period bungalow or today's tiny house. Built-ins also serve the modern desire for uncluttered interiors. • The idea is not new. We find built-ins in every era and house style. Some are simple or traditional, some drip with design and craftsmanship, and some are a little nutty. Here we look at a few originals. **BY PATRICIA POORE**

original period **built-ins**

PERMANENT FURNITURE FOR EVERY ERA

Bookcases and buffets, inglenooks and china cabinets, window benches & more: original built-in furniture from any period inspires new work today.



BUILT-INS for dining

Impressive built-ins evolved from backless, shallow cupboards that stood in Colonial keeping rooms. In the 18th century, the cupboard moved to the parlor used for dining, to become the renowned corner cabinet of the Georgian and Federal periods. These featured fine millwork and carving and most often had display shelves over closed storage. • The Victorian era saw built-in, glazed china cabinets matching the fine hardwood used for trim—this in addition to a fully fitted-out butler's pantry connecting the kitchen to the dining room. • The heyday of the dining-room built-in was arguably ca. 1900–1930, when Arts & Crafts Bungalows, American Foursquares, and Tudors often featured a massive built-in buffet or sideboard, complete with linen drawers, display cabinets, counter space, and a mirror. The sideboard might even incorporate a specially shaped radiator that doubled as a plate warmer. • Bench seats, too, often are built into dining rooms.



for the livingroom

With a raised back and narrow bench, the inglenook is both a throwback to Colonial times and a signature element of Arts & Crafts rooms. **The idea was popularized by late-19th-century architects working in the Shingle and early Colonial Revival styles.** Boston architect H.H. Richardson sometimes gets credit with importing the idea—fixed bench seats, usually on both sides of a fireplace—from England, but built-in seating has no clear time of origin. • **Bungalows and related styles often have a colonnade separating main rooms;** pillars sit on built-in display cabinets, open bookcases, or fold-down desks.

ABOVE Original millwork includes a curved, carved inglenook in the parlor of an 1892 Queen Anne in the Midwest. **LEFT** Expert woodworking and carving is on display in the rear parlor of the ca. 1804 Captain Elias Davis House in Gloucester, Mass. **OPPOSITE** In an 1888 Eastlake Victorian owned by just one family, the library retains glazed, built-in, bird's-eye maple bookcases with a fall-front secretary.

CARVED shell corner cabinets come to mind, as do dining-room sideboards. Benches and built-in window seats appear in every period—in a Georgian parlor, a Queen Anne turret, a bungalow window bay. Mid-century Modern houses and Ranches often have sleek built-ins, not only in the kitchen but also in the bedroom.

There is precedent for almost anything. When adding new cabinetwork, just be sure to use the design vocabulary that goes with the house's age, style, and degree of formality. When in doubt, simplify a design rather than embellish-

ing; and avoid back-dating.

The fervor for built-ins reached a peak during the bungalow era—when many houses were just 800 or 900 square feet, wood was abundant, and joinery was done by machines. During the 1920s, especially, seeing how many “space-saving features” could be built into the house became a minor obsession of house-plan companies and builders: Witness bookcases in the colonnade, a buffet in the dining room, linen cabinets in the upstairs hall, plus phone nooks, fold-out ironing boards, slide-away benches, convertible wall

beds... it went on and on. Even the millworks catalogs offered ready-made built-ins. In fact, you can study vintage catalogs for endless design ideas. (Start with APT's Building Technology Heritage Library, an online resource. Search “millwork catalogs” and specify years of interest at archive.org/details/buildingtechnologyheritagelibrary)

No longer can we order up a stock built-in for just a few dollars. A custom-build is the way to go today. You'll need a designer familiar with period details, along with a carpenter or cabinetmaker who does good work. Many interior de-



bedroom and study

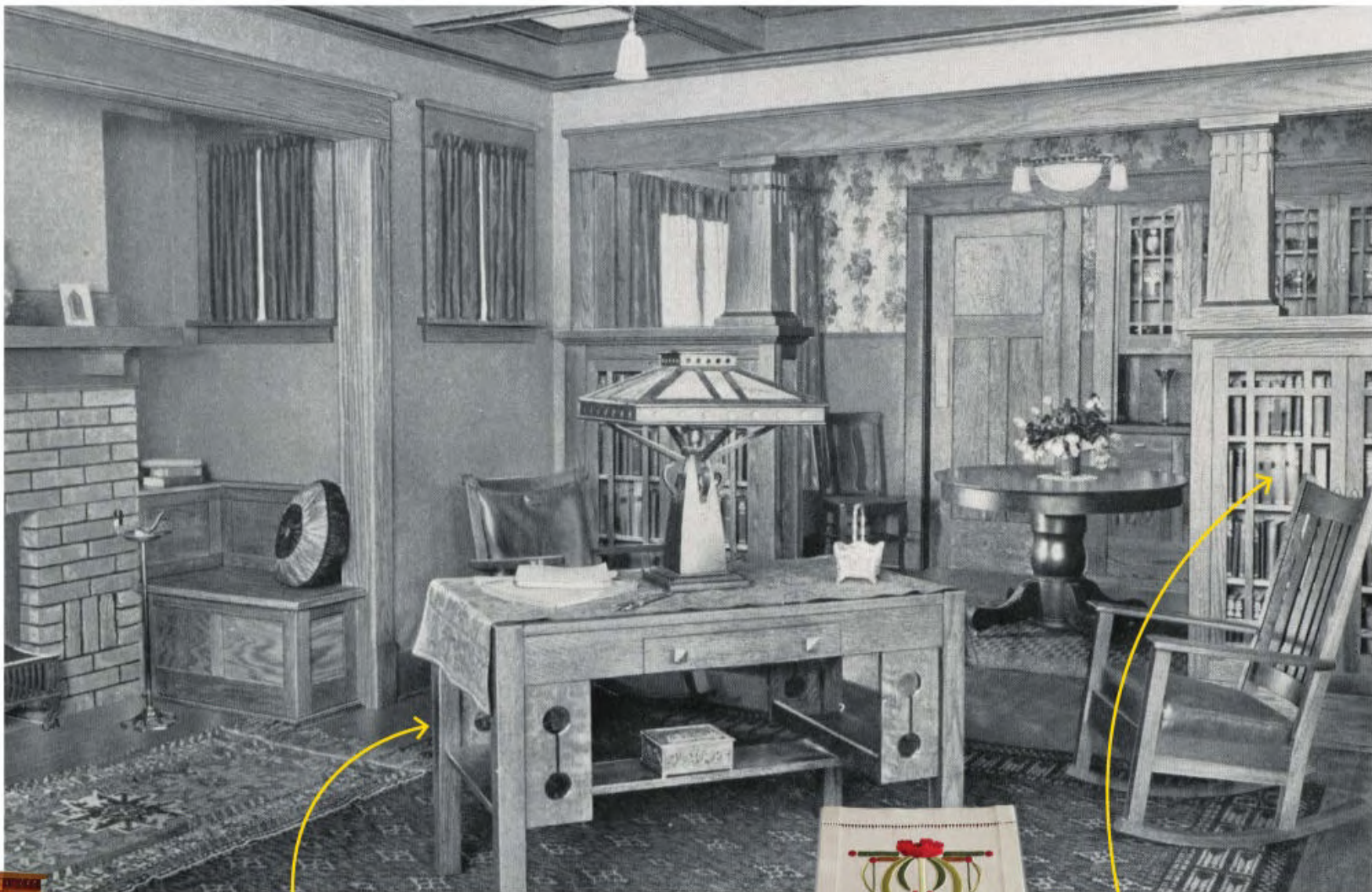
Although less common than in dining rooms, permanent furniture such as secretary desks, bookcases, and vanities were built in as part of the woodwork during the Victorian period and later.

Even closets could be quite elaborate, as compartments along one wall or as a full, separate dressing room with built-in drawers, wardrobes, and mirrors. Upstairs, a linen cabinet with pull-down doors and multiple drawers served bedrooms and baths. Bigger houses of the 1920s are likely to have such amenities.



Permanent Furniture, 1917

From "Better Built Homes, Vol. II" by Curtis Lumber & Millwork.



The Prairie Craftsman lamp is inspired by those of the early 1900s. It's 18" square at the shade and 23" high. This version is in stained, quarter-sawn white oak with cobalt glass and acorn pull chains; the shade may be ordered with mica panels. About \$1,025. See also lamps with Ephraim Pottery bases. ragdalehomefurnishings.com

Craftsman style dominates as late as 1917 in the influential Curtis catalogs, which, by 1920, had switched to Colonial Revival design.

The re-issue of an original design by L. & J.G. Stickley, today's Chapel Street Rocker is virtually the same as the one in the 1917 room. Flared back and arms supported by corbels are distinctive. In solid oak with custom options; 28" wide by 40 1/2" tall. MSRP starts at \$2,725. stickley.com



Stenciled and embroidered table squares, rounds, and scarves were popular in this period. Shown is the Poppies table scarf, embroidered by Natalie Richards on Belgian linen, 14" x 52"; custom lengths available. It's \$365, or \$65 for a kit. See pillows, too. paint-by-threads.com

Fireplace benches, colonnade and bookcases, the sideboard, doors, and beams are from Curtis.

With similar scale to the fill paper shown in the dining room, 'Honeysuckle' is from Bradbury & Bradbury's Arts & Crafts Collection. In Ochre (shown) or Ruby; sold by the 30-sq.-ft. roll, \$106. See also designs 'Savaric' and 'Burnaby', all at bradbury.com





LEFT In a 1915 house in Portland, Ore., the secretary desk hides a pullout bed on wood wheels. **INSET** The secretary and bed are original. **RIGHT** (top) White-enameled, built-in kitchen cabinets are typical of the bungalow era; these are in the 1915 Lanterman House. (bottom) Vanity, wall and base cabinets, and a mirror with crown moulding are built in at the 1886 Haas-Lilienthal House, in San Francisco.



ODD EXAMPLES

Beds that slide into wainscots, attic stairs that unfold from a closet, foldaway ironing boards—we’ve seen them all. (Perhaps the strangest was a kitchen banquette/bed that converts to a one-person “sleeping porch.”)

signers have a go-to woodworking team. A large built-in, especially, will add character as well as storage to the house. A piece made of paint-grade wood will cost less than one made with a fine hardwood to be given a clear finish.

“Consider how and where the piece will be built,” says Mary Ellen Polson, author of *Trim Idea Book* (Taunton). “A cabinetmaker, for instance, will usually create the piece in a shop, then custom fit it after assembly. A carpenter may build it right in your living room or bedroom, which turns your house into a job site.”

Polson suggests inquiring about (or specifying) construction techniques, asking for mortise-and-tenon joints, for example, rather than butt joints or splines. As with freestanding furniture, the stronger the joinery, the longer the built-in piece will last.

Built-ins can go almost anywhere. Obvious locations include the kitchen and bath, of course, as well as a pantry or a mudroom, which might have any-

thing from open shelves and cubbies to “lockers” and fitted closets, along with a bench seat. We often assume that built-in kitchen cabinets date to the mid-20th century. Actually, a built-in base cabinet or tall pantry cabinet was common in Victorian and early-20th-century kitchens, as are pantries fitted with drawers, lower cabinets, and glazed upper cabinets.

Following householders in the past, consider other unused space to accommodate built-in furniture: deep drawers built into the sloped area under eaves, say; cabinets or pullouts in the vacant spandrel under a staircase; a tall bookcase or china cabinet next to or flanking a chimney breast.

Finally, look for evidence of a built-in that may have been removed. Colonnades were torn out during changes in taste; patched flooring and “ghosting” on the walls may suggest where one once stood. A breakfast nook may have disappeared during kitchen renovation, or even turned into a powder room. Look for clues!



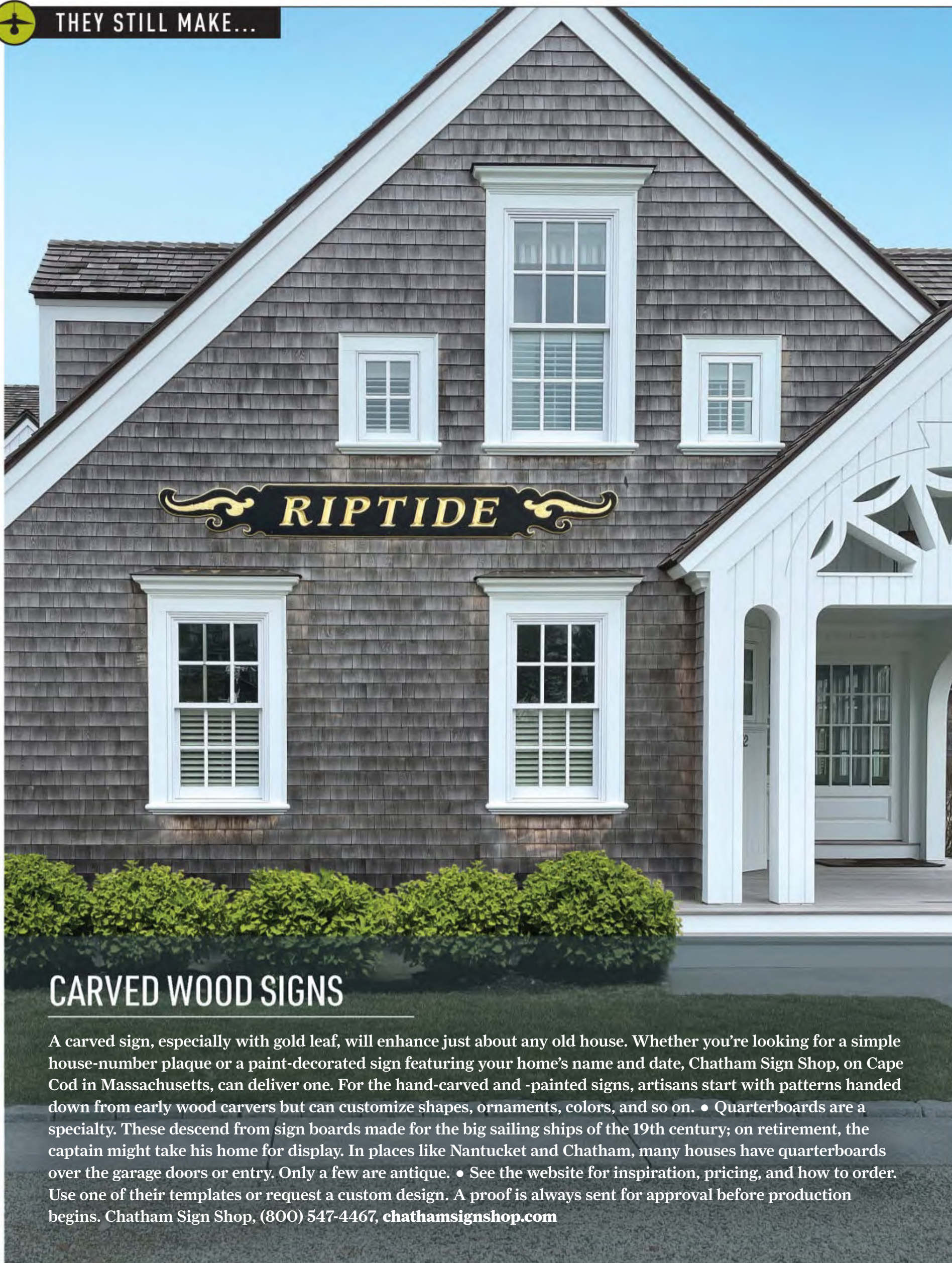
KITCHEN & BATH CABINETS EARLY ON

The fitted kitchen with continuous base and wall cabinets became standard in the 20th-century postwar period. Many houses had built-ins earlier, though, particularly after ca. 1890, if only a single large pantry cabinet in the kitchen. In urban and estate houses, Victorian butler’s pantries were built decades before; these are easily adapted for kitchen, bath, or mudroom today. The breakfast nook was a popular feature in bungalows ca. 1900–1940.





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Arts & Crafts Design, Built In

A modern kitchen has the appeal of an Arts & Crafts living room. **By Patricia Poore**

This kitchen was designed for a turn-of-the-20th-century house in Port Washington, Wisconsin. Arts & Crafts details are evident in the original house built during a transition away from Victorian styles. The homeowners were dismayed by the outdated and cramped kitchen they'd inherited. With architect Louis Wasserman of Milwaukee, they selected Crown Point Cabinetry to build cabinets and trim.

Quarter-sawn white oak, Arts & Crafts tile, and custom details are stunning. Crown Point designer Diana Stowell says the job was technically challenging: a support beam was needed; electrical and plumbing elements had to be disguised. She brought in Fred Puksta, a Crown Point product developer, to help with problem solving. Everything is hidden in the Craftsman-style ceiling design and a large, square pillar at the open end of the peninsula.

The oak kitchen is flanked by a painted wet bar near the kitchen entry and storage built under the stairs. The main room is impressive for its warmth and furniture-quality details: crown mouldings, brackets, tenons, chamfers, even the toe-kick design.



1. SECONDARY STATION

Between the kitchen's entry door and the peninsula that divides the space, a second prep and cleanup station serves as a wet bar. Glassware and dishes are displayed in glass cabinets. A small sink and second dishwasher make cleanup easy.

2. METAL FINISHES

Although the oak kitchen has a furniture-like look, the designers updated it by using white-metal fittings and fixtures, rather than copper. Nickel (and zinc) are appropriate for kitchens in this period and they marry well with stainless steel appliances.

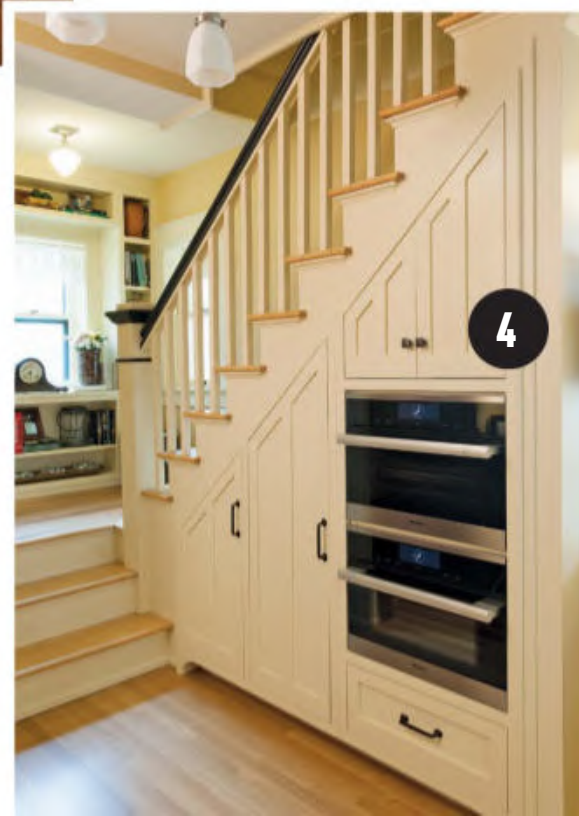


3. ARTFUL TILE

Handmade tiles from Motawi Tileworks brighten the stained oak with their color and texture. Deco tiles include 'Owl' from their Arts & Crafts Relief tile collection. The nature-inspired, period-perfect green glaze is called Lichen.

4. MAX SPACE

Specialty ovens are built in under the stairs, along with additional cabinets and drawers in the spandrel. The owner is an avid cook, so storage and utility were maximized around the main kitchen.



BE INSPIRED...

An updated classic, **Brasslight Gallery's** Sunflower **Two-light Narrow Pendant** (with 2 1/4" shade holders) comes in 13 finish options with a choice of shades. The canopy has a cast, sunflower-motif medallion. It's shown with Opal Satine Chablis Shades. The bottom width is 12.4"; cost is \$552. brasslightgallery.com



Motawi Tileworks, an innovative maker of hand-made art and **installation tile**, produces historically inspired designs influenced by nature, in styles from Arts & Crafts through Mid-century Modern. Find field and deco tiles, relief tiles, and trim pieces suitable for backsplashes, floors, fireplaces & more. Custom quotes. motawi.com

Native Trails offers copper and nickel sinks—square, round, farmhouse, divided, etc. With an OD of 12.5", the Diego is a **compact bar sink** with near-vertical walls for maximum capacity. In hammered copper with a brushed nickel finish; undermount or drop-in. The handmade sink is \$898 in nickel. nativetrailshome.com






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EXPLORE PROVEN FIXES FOR
STAINS, MISSING BOARDS, GAPS,
MISMATCHED FINISHES, AND
THAT PESKY TAR PAPER FROM
LATER FLOORINGS.

page 32

Revealing the beauty beneath: a heart-pine floor sticky and stained by old tar paper, ready for new life.



32

COMEBACK FLOORS: COMMON PROBLEMS & FIXES

Whether damaged or hidden under later floor coverings, vintage floors can see the light of day.



36 SHOP TOUR

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44 SALVAGE IT

46 OLD HOUSE DIYer

49 DO THIS, NOT THAT

comeback FLOORS

Floors hand-cut or milled from old-growth woods can withstand decades of abuse. Over the arc of time, however, settling and subsidence, careless repairs, and damage from water or pets create challenges for even these hardy survivors.

Water probably causes the most damage, especially in kitchens and bathrooms. Overflowing taps, unseen leaks, spills, and persistent dripping slowly ruin wood, turning it soft and spongy. • Houses also settle, allowing floorboards to rub against one another or supporting members to create annoying squeaks. Then there's actual material damage—from burns, pet urine, poorly conceived alterations, and more. It goes almost without saying that a problem floor usually comes with multiple issues. • In the case of Wendy and Alex Santantonio's bathroom in their American Foursquare house, water leaks had severely damaged about a third of an antique heart-pine floor. The damage was concealed under layers of shoddy materials that had to be stripped away before the floor could be assessed and repaired. • In Gina Bellous' Queen Anne, vertical-grain, tongue-and groove floors upstairs had been coated in layers of glue, burlap, and paint before more recent desecration by feral cats. Boards were missing altogether or replaced with plywood. • In both cases, the owner approached repairs by thinking through problems as they presented themselves. Thanks to persistence and ingenuity, their floors came through beautifully.

Concealed underneath layers of obsolete and worn-out materials, a vintage floor begins to see the light of day.

PAUL SCHLEMMER / STOCKSY / ADOBE STOCK



THE PRO TIP

*Whether you are scraping, sanding, or chipping away at old flooring layers, be sure to wear a suitable mask that protects against particulates and chemicals. Unknown irritants and toxins may lurk in adhesives, felt, cement, and in flooring materials themselves. **If you suspect a layer contains asbestos, test first.***

→ EXCAVATING for GOLD

By Alex & Wendy Santantonio

The floor in the downstairs bath of our 1908 Foursquare was our first project. The dingy tile was badly scratched and cracked and we found it concealed heart pine underneath. The 1½" square tiles had been installed with glue over a sub-standard plywood layer, without an isolation membrane. A patched area around the toilet had subsided so much the floor dipped and the toilet rocked.

Demolition (of tile, plywood, and a felt-and-glue layer) dropped the height of the floor by almost an inch. We lowered the toilet flange by the same amount, cutting out the old one below the floor and splicing in a new stub. We framed in reinforcement lumber directly below the toilet and around the waste line. The floor is now fully supported.

Several of the pine boards were too far gone. Still, there was enough sound wood to proceed with a bundle of heart pine from a local supplier. New boards were slightly different in thickness from our old tongue-and-groove; we made it work by adding shims underneath.

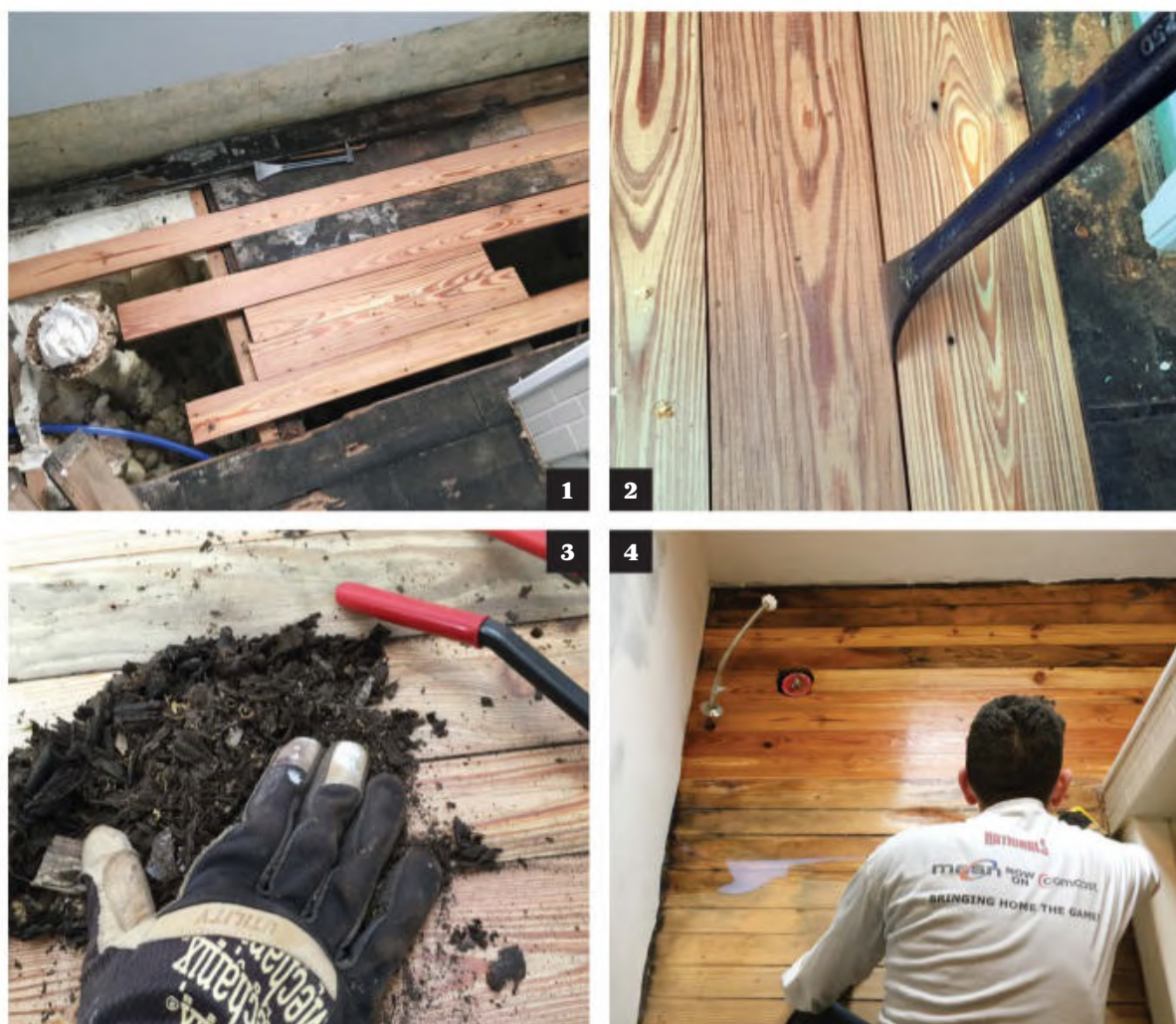
A few boards needed to be narrower to fit into the layout. We ripped a few to about 2" wide, then cut a new groove on the side. We laid the boards, weaving new with old, face-nailing into joists rather than blind-nailing; we'd fill holes later.

Tar from the felt/tar-paper layer had turned some old boards almost black. We decided to hand-scrape that to avoid clogging a sander. Next, because the room is small, we used a belt sander and random orbital sander rather than renting equipment. We began with 40-grit paper, sanding with the grain on old boards and on the diagonal across new boards, which flattened the floor but left marks on the wood—removed with final passes of finer grit paper, going with the grain; we used a sandpaper belt cleaner. After filing nail holes, we sealed with a preferred water-based finish: Pallmann Pal-X 325 sealer.



LEFT The restored antique pine floor blends old and new heart pine.

INSET Boards were damaged around the cut nail line where rusted nails had eaten away some of the wood—which had been heavily coated with tar from an old layer of felt paper.

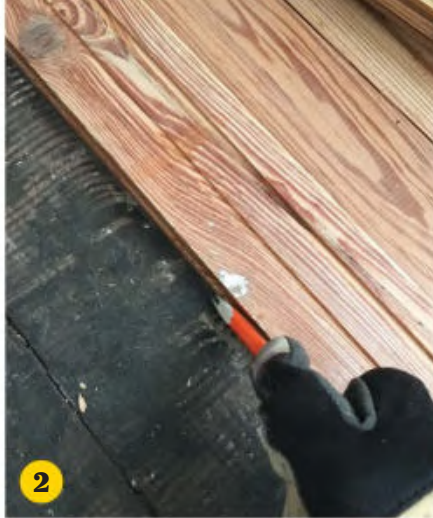


Heart Pine Rescue **1.** The authors staggered new wood in between existing boards, then trimmed pieces to fill in gaps. **2.** Rather than butt the new boards in against existing wood, they used a prybar to force gaps similar to the ones in the existing floor. **3.** The crumbly residue made an excellent filler for gaps between old and new boards. **4.** Alex methodically works the clear-coat sealer back and forth to remove excess and even out the finish.

1



2



3



one A board with a badly damaged tongue lay in the middle of the reconfigured floor.

two Using a board to set the cut line, we penciled in a line to follow.

three We trimmed away the bad wood with a circular saw.

Trimming a Damaged Board *As we planned the layout, we realized a board with a damaged edge would end up in the middle of the floor, where it would be easy to see. Rather than trying to disguise it by splicing in a patch or using wood filler, we cut the damaged piece back about 1" from the edge. —A.S.*

INSET, BOTTOM We mixed sawdust (from wood that matched the floor) with wood glue (here, Titebond) until the consistency fell somewhere between tuna-fish salad and peanut butter. It should be moist. **BELOW** Where the filling covered up natural gaps between boards, we recreated them by penciling in lines.

HOME COOKING In a few areas, wood had deteriorated or been damaged and needed minor repair. Not just any old wood filler would do, either: it had to be made from antique heart-pine flooring. Luckily, we had a large container of sawdust residue on hand from floors previously sanded elsewhere in the house. Our recipe was simple (sawdust and wood glue) but getting the mixture to the right consistency took trial and error. —A.S.



SQUEAKING & bouncing

Although these annoyances may seem similar, there is a difference between a floor that squeaks and one that bounces. A squeak usually means a floorboard is loose or is rubbing against another board and is generally a minor problem. On the other hand, a bouncing floor is a sign of inadequate support. ● Squeaks are best repaired from below. Locate the squeaky spot by looking up at the subfloor from below while someone walks on top. To fix the squeak, drive a short screw up through the subfloor until it grabs the finish flooring. Add more screws if needed. If there's no access from below, try driving a pair of finishing nails toward each other where the floorboards meet into the joist below (above). Once the squeak stops, set the nails and patch with wood filler. ● A springy or bouncing floor may not be making contact with supporting joists, or the joist is undersized for the weight load. Try reinforcing existing joists by nailing a 2x4 along the full length, tight to the subflooring. If any joists are damaged, replace or repair them. In houses where joists are more than 16" apart—common in houses built before standard building codes—it may be necessary to add new joists or cross-bridging to spread the weight load. —OHJ archive

ABOVE To stop a squeak where there is no subfloor access, drive two finishing nails toward each other where the floorboards meet the joist below.



SHOPTOUR: WHIDBEY MILLHOUSE

Milling wood is a tradition in Bret Christensen's family; they have owned and operated lumber mills in the Pacific Northwest for over a century. When a small, high-quality lumber mill in picturesque Freeland, a hamlet on the southern end of Whidbey Island, in Puget Sound, came up for sale, Bret didn't hesitate: he bought Whidbey Millhouse in 2020.

Working in partnership with his son, Maverick Christensen, Bret is continuing the mill's focus on all-natural, historically accurate work, along with a longstanding commitment to sustainable forestry. The mill recently moved to a 12,000-square-foot warehouse across the street from the original shop, substantially expanding operations and productivity.

Kiln-dried and heat-treated raw materials are used to produce flooring (along with treads and risers, etc.), shiplap boards, V-joint ceilings, and siding in Douglas fir, spruce, and pine. Waste is collected for recycling with an air-suction dust collector. The goods are shipped all around the country.

A recent project was running 20,000 linear feet of clear Douglas fir for a historic restoration in nearby Coupeville. The astounding 24-foot-long boards of ultra-fine, vertical-grain boards were run without a flaw. That length is very desirable and almost unheard-of.

The most popular products

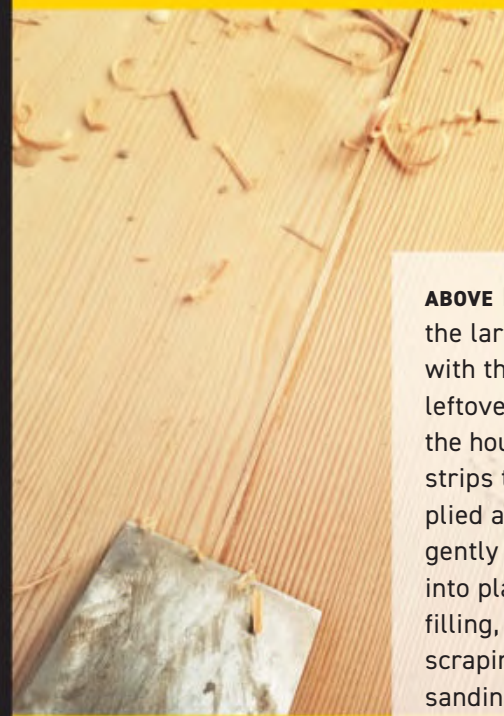
are the Douglas fir flooring and shiplap; rustic shiplap is another favorite. The mill also produces Scandinavian-style, clear, wide-plank flooring.

Bret Christensen's advice to customers? For the best final result, be sure to let wood products acclimate, stored inside, before installation, to allow the new wood to match the home's ambient conditions. He says it can take up to several weeks, so "be patient." —BRIAN D. COLEMAN



LEFT Standing near boards to be shipped from Whidbey Millhouse, from left: Maverick Christensen and Bret Christensen.

ABOVE (top) Whidbey Millhouse can mill boards up to 24' long. (below) Vertical grain tongue-and-groove Douglas fir, ready to head out the door.



ABOVE Bellous filled the largest cracks with thin strips of leftover wood from the house. She cut the strips to fit, then applied a little glue and gently tapped them into place. **LEFT** After filling, there's a final scraping and a last sanding to get rid of the excess.

FILLING WOODgaps

In many places, the cracks between my floorboards were quite wide, and there was a lot of dirt and wood filler in them. While I realize that filling in the cracks is controversial because wood shrinks and swells, **I wanted a smooth, resilient surface, especially in the bathroom.**

As a first step, I scraped out the old wood filler and dirt by hand, using a Husky contour scraper with pointed and flat blades. —Gina Bellous

GINA BELLIOUS (FILLING WOOD GAPS & FINISHED BY HAND, OPP.)

ALTERNATIVE finishes

Time was when every floor got “refreshed” by multiple sandings and at least three coats of quick-drying polyurethane. No more. A spate of **new ways to finish a hardwood floor ranges from enhanced tung oils to hard-wax oil “systems”** that work by molecular bonding in a one-step process that doesn't require stripping.

Sutherland Welles has long offered a no-VOC polymerized tung oil that produces the look of a hand-rubbed natural finish. It accepts the company's super-saturated stains, which intentionally resemble historic finishes on woods like heart pine, maple, oak, and walnut. Similarly, **Half & Half from Real Milk Paint is a 50/50 blend of tung oil and a natural citrus solvent thinner, taking the guesswork out of the thinning process.** The nontoxic blend goes on easily and works well on existing or historic floors.

That said, **tung oils require multiple coats with long drying times in between**, similar to oil-based polyurethanes. Curing times are similar for hard-wax oil finishes that work by molecular bonding. Luckily, **WOCA's Diamond Oil Active and Rubio Monocoat's Oil Plus2 both color and protect wood in a single coat.** Rather than resting on top like polyurethane, the plant-based finishes penetrate wood fibers near the surface of the wood, keeping the look natural. Oil Plus2 stains are keyed to wood species; other products can produce fumed, smoked, and pre-aged effects. —*Mary Ellen Polson*



Half & Half, a non-toxic mix of tung oil and food-grade thinner, goes on easily, straight from the container.



LEFT A sample of the 1" thick vertical-grain Douglas fir that runs throughout the house. The owner was able to use scraps from boards that had to be replaced to make repairs in other locations. **BELOW** Electrical lines ran under the patch.



Damaged areas were repaired by lacing in salvaged wood of the same species, wherever possible.

► FINISHED BY *hand* By Gina Bellous

When a house has been vacant for years except as a home for feral cats, there's bound to be some damage. The tongue-and-groove floors in mine were covered with paint, a mixture of glue and burlap, and old cat poop and urine. In some areas, floorboards were missing completely. A previous owner had cut open the gorgeous old Douglas fir in the primary bedroom to run new electrical wire, then patched it roughly with plywood. I hired a team of pros to lace in new boards that closely matched the originals and then sand. Fortunately, glue and carpet backing kept most of the cat urine from reaching the wood, which cleaned up beautifully after sanding. By then I'd blown the construction budget so I did some minor but laborious filling of gaps in the floorboards. I also stained them by hand, evening out the differences in tone between old and replacement boards.

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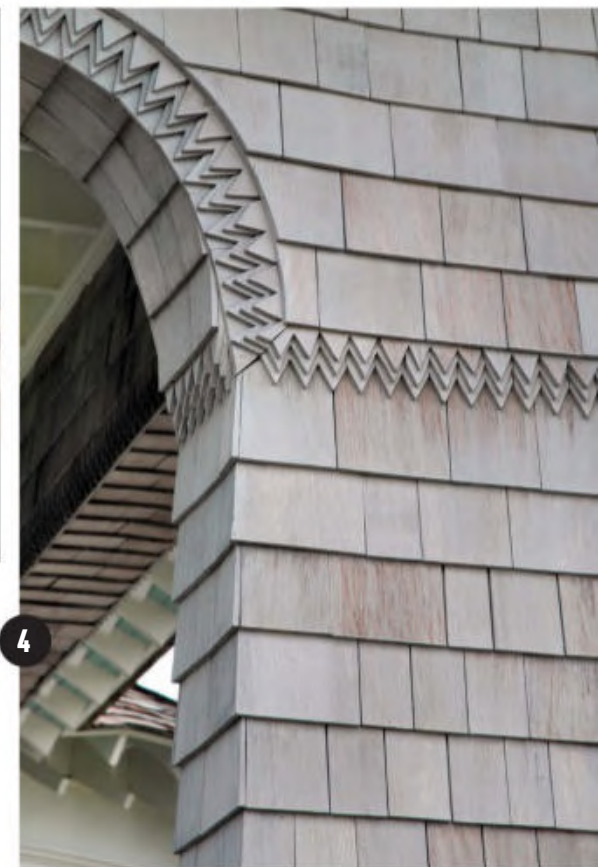
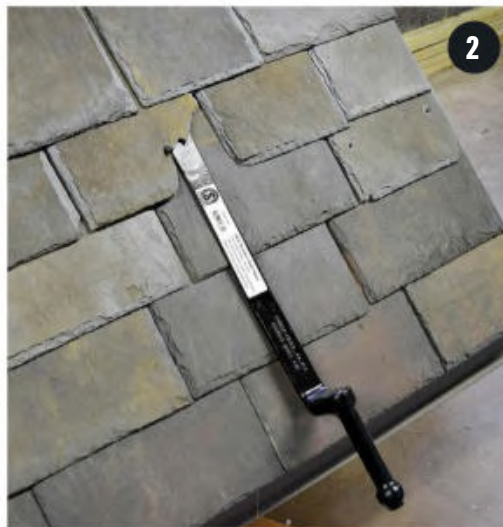
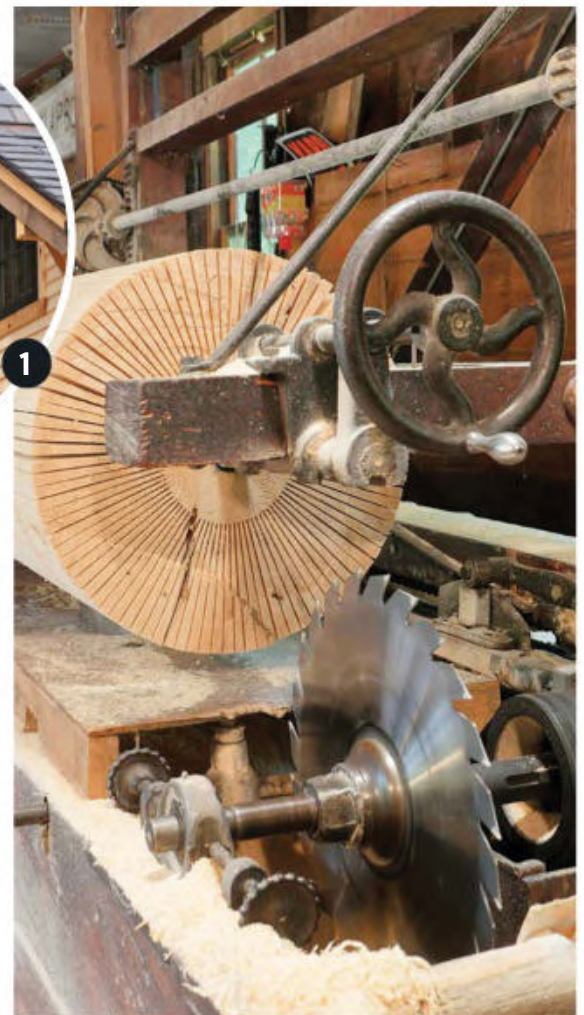
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Carpeting the Stairs

A staircase runner adds comfort and safety, color, pattern, and a period touch.

By Brian D. Coleman



I'll admit I waited a while before carpeting my stairs. We'd spent a year replacing the worn-out, chipped and painted treads with hand-finished oak and were enjoying the beautiful wood. A couple of winters with wet shoes and muddy paws showed it was time to preserve that woodwork. I decided that a carpet runner would protect the treads but still show off the oak, while making the steps less slippery and thus safer. A stair runner is also period-appropriate for my Victorian house.

The first step was deciding on the installation method: either Hollywood or waterfall. The Hollywood (or French cap or upholstered) method wraps the carpet around the edge of the tread nosing at each step, fastening it to the riser for a fitted look. This is best on stairs that get a lot of attention, as at entries and landings, in principal hallways, in main bedroom corridors. The waterfall method is more casual. Here the carpet is secured to the edge of the stair tread but then drops straight down to the back of the next tread without being tacked to the riser. This technique is usually saved for thicker, harder-to-handle carpet and for secondary passageways such as kitchen or basement stairs. My staircase was meant to be a showstopper, so I chose

the more formal Hollywood method.

The second step was choosing the carpet. Although most runners can be cut down from a larger carpet roll, it would then need hemming on either side to prevent fraying. **I opted for a pre-hemmed runner. These are generally made in 27" and 32" widths.** I chose the narrower option to expose more wood. The typical recommendation is to choose a runner width that will expose 4" to 7" of tread on each side. Use a carpet wide

enough so that people won't step partially on the wood, which can lead to tripping. A handy tip to visualize the proper width: Cut the available widths out of paper or cardboard and test it on the treads.

I decided on a flat-weave runner in wool, for durability and easy maintenance. (Plush carpeting catches more dirt and is harder to clean.) I avoided natural sisal and jute: they look great but stain easily. I went for a borderless pattern, albeit with a busy, 19th-century colorway



EDWARD ADDEO; WILLIAM WRIGHT (OPP. TOP RIGHT)



ABOVE The Hollywood or upholstered method wraps the runner tightly around each nosing. This flat-weave carpet is the 'Brookfield' pattern from Woodard & Greenstein, which reproduces an antique flea-market find.

OPPOSITE In the serene foyer of an addition to an 1850s house, a very simple runner is used for each leg of the staircase.

featuring deep burgundies and golds. You might consider a border to add color, or a woven pattern edging a plain runner for a tailored look.

To calculate the length of carpet you need, measure the depth of a stair tread and the height of a riser, add those together, and multiply by the number of steps, then add one inch extra for each nosing (if using the Hollywood method). Add another 6" to account for waste or, if you are splicing more than one runner, add an additional 12" to account for seams. Don't forget to measure and add landings. Stair runners typically are sold in one-foot increments. **Borders and seams are cut and sewn before installation.**

You may not want to install a runner yourself, especially if the carpet was expensive. Pros do the job quickly and affordably. Here is the sequence:

DECORATIVE DETAILS

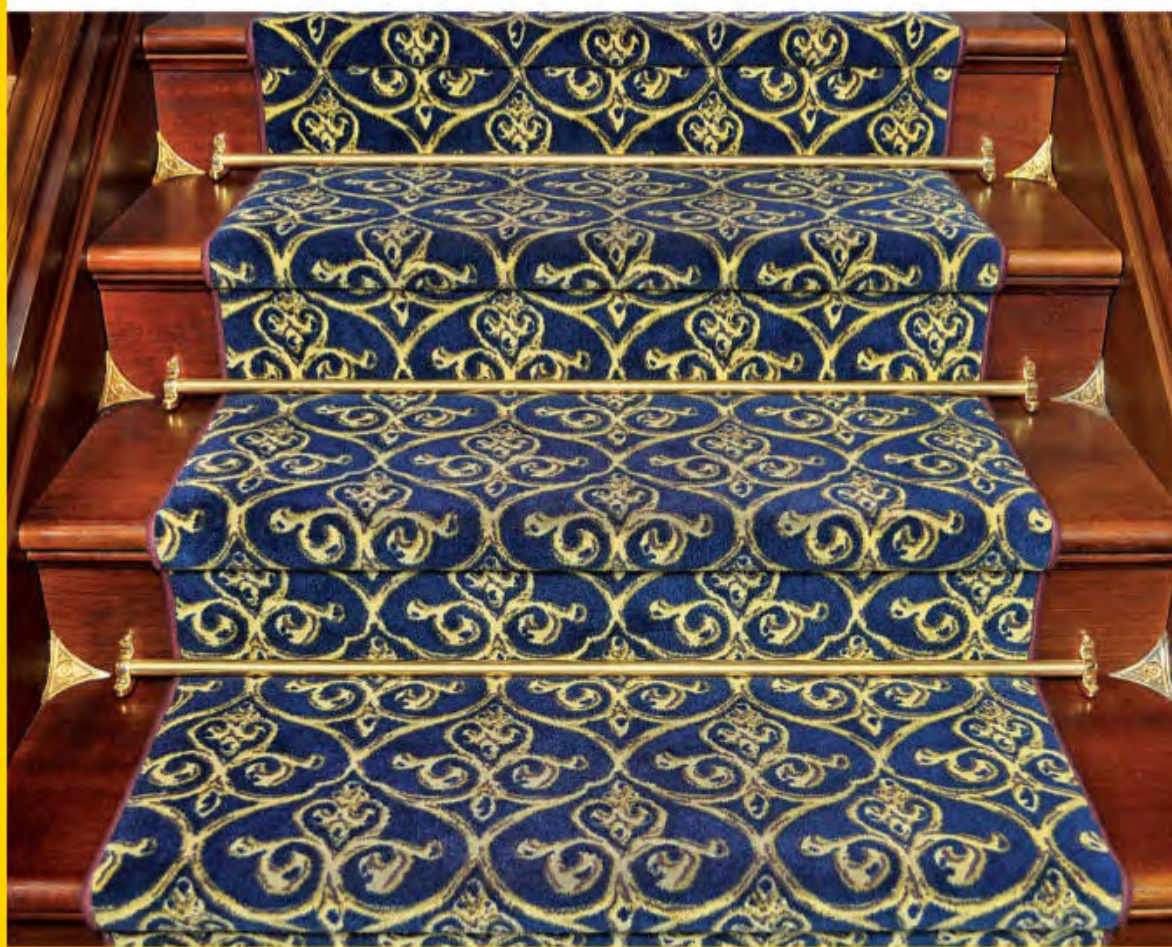
ON RODS, CLIPS & DUST CORNERS



Since the late 1700s, stair rods (aka carpet rods) have been used to hold runners in place. They are a practical way to extend the life of the carpet, as the runner may be shifted so as not to wear out

at the nosings. (This sometimes, however, made for loose, slippery runner.) The rods—wood or brass or another metal—were secured on each side into brackets, which may have had fancy ball, acorn, or fleur-de-lys finials. • Carpet clips were another way of securing the runner. These bolt onto each end of the riser and clip around the runner. Modern installation methods have made carpet rods and clips purely decorative, but they remain an attractive period detail. Dust corners were popular, too. Installed at the junction of tread, riser, and skirt board, these keep dust bunnies from settling into the corners. They're still available today.

BELOW No longer strictly necessary, stair rods do hide staple dimples and any pattern mismatch at a cut. The traditional rod and dust corners are from Vintage Hardware and Lighting. **TOP** This copper stair clip, at the author's home, is ca. 1920.





RIGHT Seaming was done by the carpet company before installation; the 'Cheshire' is from Woodard & Greenstein. **TOP** The waterfall method was used to install the bordered runner by Thistle Hill Weavers.

Brass rods are used on intermittent treads. **ABOVE** Designer Barry Dixon added a dragon's tail or jester's hat at the bottom of a stair to add pizzazz to a back hall. (Be sure not to create a tripping hazard.)

BELOW The 'Somerset' pattern from Woodard & Greenstein adds movement on winders; note the neatly tailored folds.



Installation on a straight run might be an easy DIY job. Staircases with wedge-shape winders present more of a challenge.

Installation starts with laying down tack strips (the tacks point up) that will hold the carpet in place. Each strip is cut four inches shorter than the width of the runner and there are two for each stair—one for the riser and one for the tread. Each strip is centered on the step; the first is nailed on the riser $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the bottom, the second on the tread $\frac{1}{4}$ " from the back of the step. The strips should angle towards each other so the tacks are nearly touching.

Carpet padding provides a cushion for the runner, extending its life. It's worth the extra effort. Padding is cut with a utility knife into pieces the same width as each tack strip and three inches longer than the depth of the tread (without covering the tack strips). Each pad is stapled in place in front of the tack strip, pulled tightly down and over the stair nosing, then stapled underneath the riser. Any excess padding is trimmed away.

The runner itself is installed from

the bottom of the staircase and up. The runner is centered and pressed into the bottom riser's tack strip (with the help of a carpet awl), fitted tightly with the edge of the carpet, even with the floor. (Extra carpet may be trimmed with a carpet knife or shears). The runner is stapled to the riser, with staples three inches apart. Now the carpet is pulled up and over the nosing towards the next tack strip. Installers use a knee kicker to tighten the carpet along the edges, starting in the middle and working outwards to eliminate wrinkles or bubbles. Finally, the carpet is tightly installed onto the tack strip between tread and riser, then stapled on either end of the tack strip and to the outer edge, two inches from the bottom of the riser. At the top riser, the upper edge of the runner is folded back and stapled underneath the overhanging nosing of the flooring.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 79.

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SALVAGE IT



Balcony Bits Find Decorative Reuse

Ornate wrought iron with patina is treasured. **By Brian D. Coleman**



When he's in Paris, wrought-iron balcony railings always catch the eye of Bruce Cusmano, owner of Metropolitan Artifacts in Atlanta, which sells American and European architectural antiques. French railings dating to the 18th and 19th centuries are ornate with stylized leaves and flowers, fleurs-de-lys, and geometric patterns. Many of the railings are carefully salvaged when old buildings are remodeled. Cusmano brings them to Atlanta to be repurposed as decorative accents, including fireplace andirons and table lamps. More at metropolitanartifacts.com

ABOVE Part of a 19th-century balcony railing was transformed into a sculptural lamp topped with a parchment shade. **INSET** Balcony knees become andirons for the fireplace.



The Cost

THE PURCHASE PRICE OF A PAIR OF FINISHED ANDIRONS IS \$500 AND UP; LAMPS COST \$300 AND UP.

ANDIRONS

railing pieces	\$100 and up
steel shank & legs	\$25
Rust-Oleum paint	\$20
Wrinkle Plus paint	\$20
nuts & bolts	\$10

TOTAL \$175

LAMPS

railing pieces	\$100 and up
steel base	\$20
Rust-Oleum paint	\$20
lamp tube, wiring, socket	\$45
nuts & bolts	\$10
shade	\$25 and up

TOTAL \$220

the andirons

Andirons are the short-legged bars that cradle fireplace logs; vertical guards prevent the logs from rolling forward. A base consisting of a horizontal shank supported on three or four ½"-2" legs is made with 1" solid steel; this anchors the andiron and supports the logs. Shanks are typically 12"-18" long, depending on the depth of the fireplace.

The corner rail or "knee" of the balcony railing, which will become the decorative front of the andiron, is cut free with an acetylene torch. Loose paint is removed with a wire brush. (Cusmano avoids sandblasting as it removes all the iron's patina.) The piece is refinished with car motor paint such as Wrinkle Plus to give a heat-resistant and textured finish. A final, decorative coat is applied in gold, bronze, or simple black, using a heat-resistant paint such as Rust-Oleum.

This finished front piece is then welded to the shank. Proportion matters: It's recommended that the andirons rise no more than two-thirds the height of the firebox.

table lamps

Pieces from wrought-iron balcony railings also make lovely table lamps. First, a base is cut from ½" steel, the edges are beveled with



ABOVE The corners or knees from a Parisian railing become andirons, elegantly finished in gold paint. **BOTTOM** Iron balcony ornaments retain their patina.

an angle grinder or drill (with a sandpaper wheel or a grinding stone); then the piece is polished with a jeweler's wheel and rouge.

A hole is drilled with a steel bit in the bottom of the base; a steel, all-thread lamp tube is threaded from the bottom, attached with a washer and nut. Wiring is run inside and a lamp socket added on top.

The piece of railing is then cleaned carefully with only a wire brush; it may be left unfinished to save the patina or finished with Rust-Oleum paint in brass, bronze, or black. The piece is attached to the base with a nut and bolt. Bruce Cusmano likes to use a linen or parchment shade to complement the nature of the iron.

ANDIRONS *or firedogs*

Andirons, also called firedogs as they have four legs, have been used since antiquity in fireplaces both to support logs off the hearth floor and, sometimes, to hold a spit for cooking. Andirons (typically of iron) are usually a pair. They allow air to circulate under the firewood for better burning and less smoke. After the Renaissance in Europe, the front guards became increasingly decorative, often cast in a different metal such as brass, bronze, or silver. In Colonial North America, figures such as marching Hessian soldiers were popular; the Victorians let imagination run wild with designs from cats with glass eyes to dragons and sphinxes. Andirons remain a popular decorative accent.



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Dealing with Popcorn Ceilings

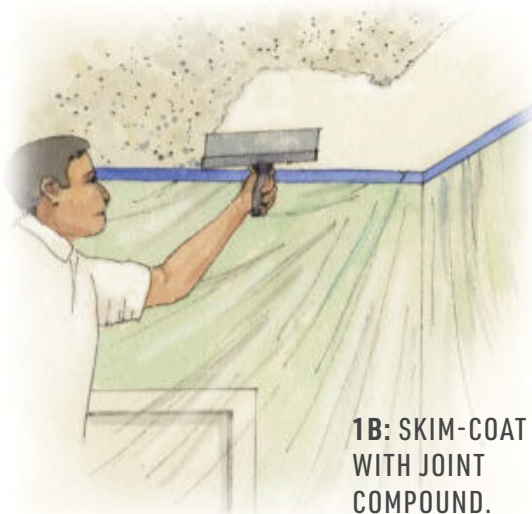
If these methods fail, you'll have to remove the ceiling and replace it with drywall or plaster. **By Patricia Poore**

First, be aware that the texture finish may contain asbestos. (Later, vermiculite and Styrofoam beads were used.) Any overpainting may contain lead. Always test for the presence of these toxins before scraping away. Wear a mask and goggles when you're creating dust and particulates. Be careful when using hot water or steam.

Your popcorn texture may have been original—applied to fresh drywall; or added later to the painted surface. It might be thick, or not. Test each method to see what works best in your situation.

METHOD 1

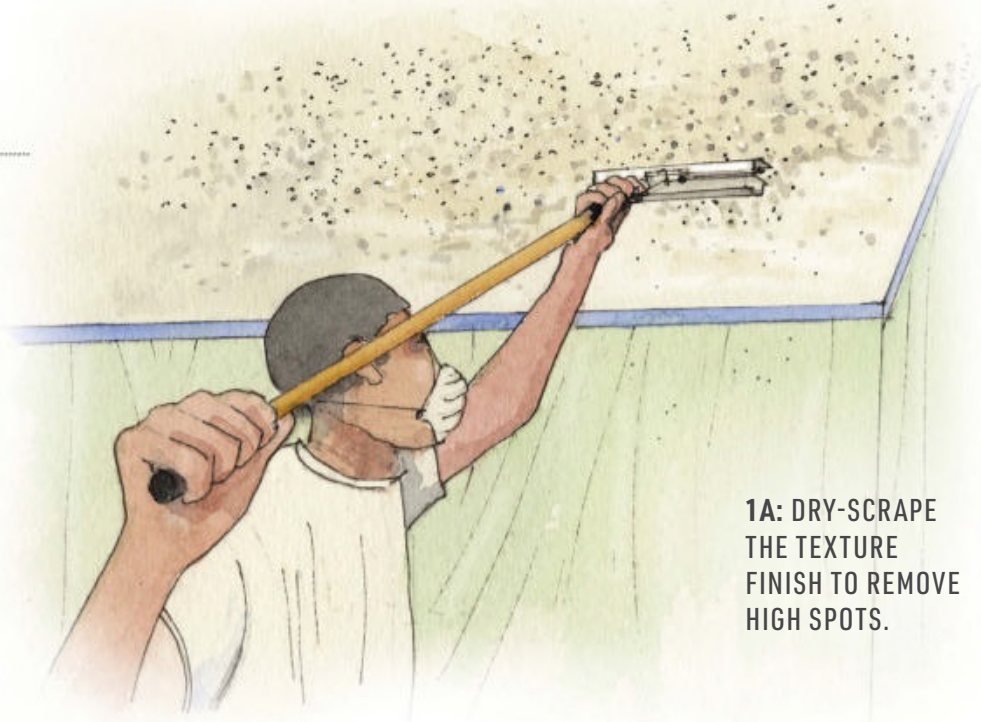
Dry scrape and sand, then skim coat. Skim coating is an option if the popcorn ceiling was painted over, because water won't penetrate. Work from a scaffold or use a long-handled scraper; try a stiff putty knife and 80-grit sandpaper on a sanding block to remove the little hills and any loose bits. Now skim-coat the surface with joint compound to fill in valleys and smooth it over.



1B: SKIM-COAT WITH JOINT COMPOUND.

An urgent question from an OHJ staffer:

"How hard would it be to get rid of my hideous popcorn ceiling?" (If you don't remember, this is a heavily textured, spray-on finish, sometimes with glitter, popular from the postwar years through the 1970s.) I looked through our archive and found little encouragement. Then I trolled the internet and YouTube. Still not encouraging but certainly entertaining. Here's my take on the options.



1A: DRY-SCRAPE THE TEXTURE FINISH TO REMOVE HIGH SPOTS.

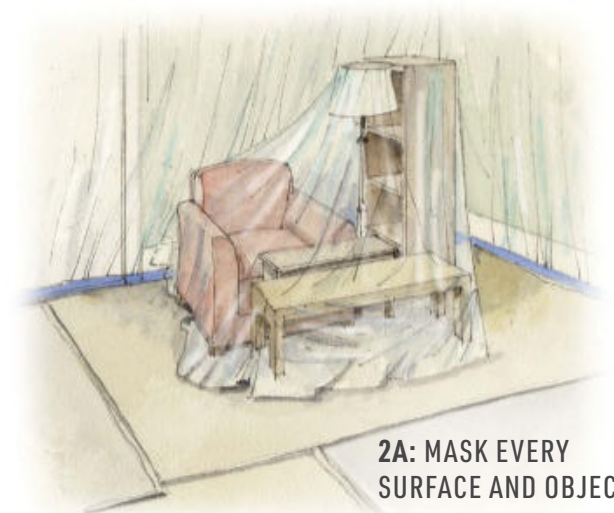
A possible downside: The popcorn may already have a weak bond to the drywall; adding joint compound, primer, and paint may be enough to make the texture coat start to peel. [One internet post suggested thinning the joint compound with water and using a short-nap roller to apply it, for less added weight. Another poster flatly stated, "Dry scraping doesn't work, it's slow and leaves gouges."]

METHOD 2

Wet, wait, and scrape. This messy but thorough approach removes all the texture coating without (if you're lucky) damaging the substrate surface. Wetting the surface also mitigates the amount of dust created. (Test for asbestos and wear a mask anyway.) If the texture coat has been overpainted since it was installed, it will be very hard to remove as the water won't penetrate. You could try using a wallpaper-remover tool to poke holes in the paint,

then wet the ceiling, wait, and wet it again before scraping.

But first: Cover every floor, wall, protrusion, and remaining furniture with plastic sheeting and tape. Put plastic on the floors



2A: MASK EVERY SURFACE AND OBJECT.

first so that wall runoff won't flow to the flooring. Shut power to and pull down ceiling fixtures, wrapping them in plastic. Always shut off electrical power during wetting and don't let the scraper blade hit any wires.



2B: WET CEILING USING PUMP SPRAYER.

Use a pump sprayer and wand to evenly spray the ceiling in sections. (Pros might use an airless sprayer with water.) Wait. Repeat wetting in areas that look dry, but don't over wet as that will damage the surface of the drywall. [An internet tip, untested: Put a bit of fabric softener or Dawn dishwashing liquid in the water.] Now use a wide scraper to "shave" dry areas in long passes at a low angle; try a 9"-12" floor scraper. Use a putty knife to go around fixtures and get into corners. If you hit a stubborn area, consider adding more water, but realize you may be at a drywall seam: be careful not to gouge or remove the tape. Use the plastic on the floor to contain the scrapings; start at one corner and fold it up carefully.

[YouTube entertainment alert: Some videos show the texture finish coming off cleanly in one pass, like peeling an orange.



2C: USE A WIDE BLADE TO SHAVE THE TEXTURE COAT.

Maybe it does, sometimes. Another video shows a homeowner blissfully spraying water at the ceiling with the ceiling fixture, uncovered and on, lighting the way! No.]

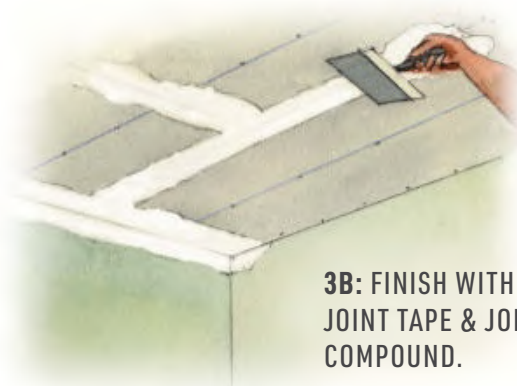
METHOD 3

Cover it up with drywall. Thoroughly wash and dry the ceiling and give it a rough sanding. You'll want two people and a drywall lift to install $\frac{1}{4}$ " or $\frac{3}{8}$ " drywall right over the existing ceiling. A summary of the typical method: Find studs, snap chalk lines on ceilings and tops of walls, attach 8' drywall panels (e.g., Sheetrock) to the ceiling with drywall screws driven into ceiling joists every 8" along panel edges and every 12" through the field of the panel. Stagger joints row to row.

Use joint tape and joint compound to finish the ceiling in the usual way.



3A: USE A RENTED LIFT TO INSTALL $\frac{3}{8}$ " DRYWALL SHEETS.



3B: FINISH WITH JOINT TAPE & JOINT COMPOUND.

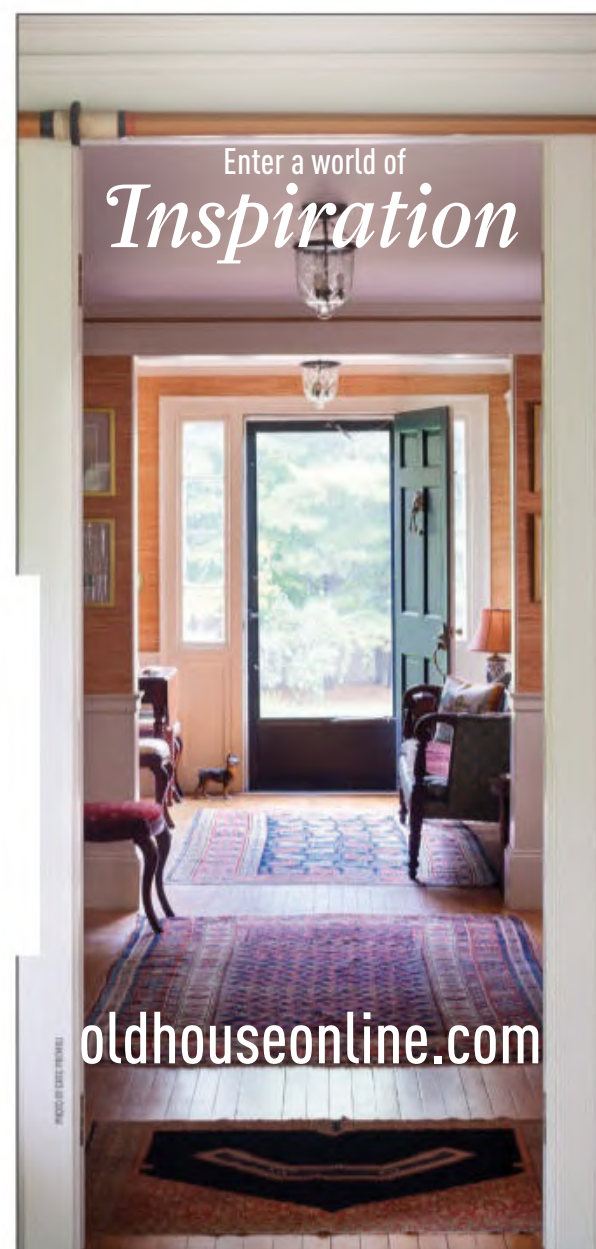
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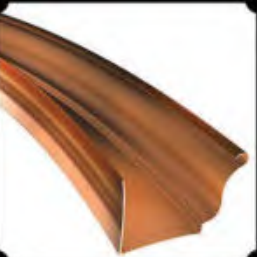
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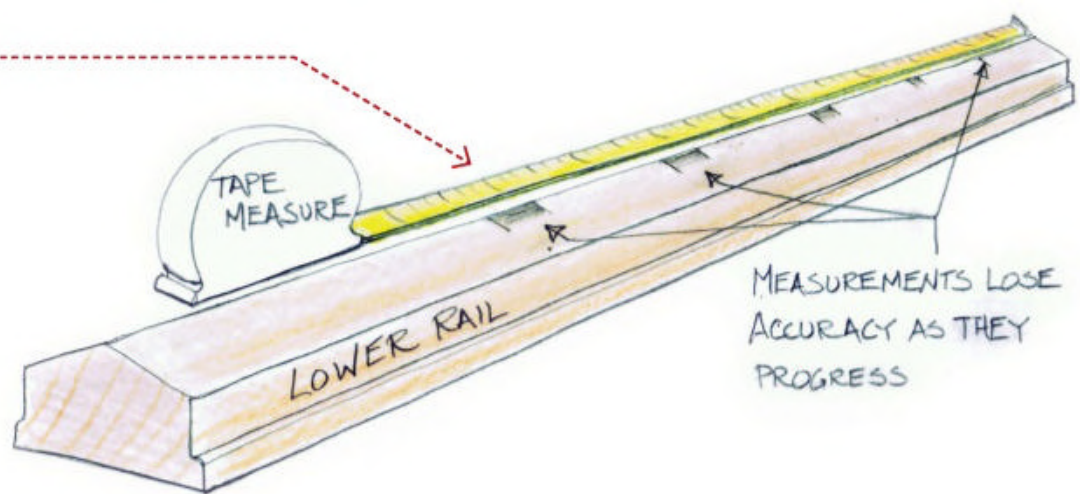
When Spacing Balusters

When rebuilding a porch or staircase rail, it's important to match the spacing of the original spindles or balusters. Building codes recommend the space between balusters be no greater than four inches. Happily, most 19th- and early-20th-century balusters were spaced closer together than that. The spacing was often one-and-a-half to two times the width of a baluster, though this might vary. • How do you mark the spacing, given the difficulty of dividing a length of rail into inches with awkward fractions? Builders have left us with a traditional tool called dividers. It looks like a drafting compass with two points. Dividers are used in everything from engineering to navigation. • For the task at hand, begin by marking a start and end line on the rail (usually an inch or two from each end) and now mark divisions with the dividers. **By Ray Tschoepe**

WRONG WAY

REPEATING AN ODD NUMBER

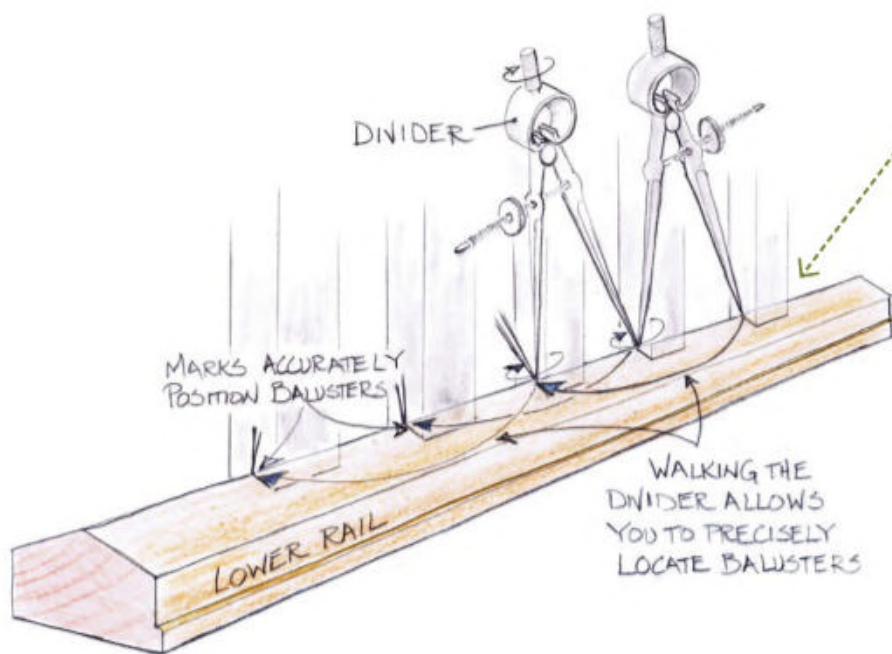
After you have marked start and end lines, you'll be faced with the task of dividing the total distance by the number of balusters to be installed. That will undoubtedly translate into a rather clumsy fraction appended to an inch measurement. It is very difficult to accurately mark a row of balusters that might be, say, a distance of 3 and $\frac{15}{16}$ inches apart from start to end. Adding multiple fractions often leads to inaccuracies.



RIGHT WAY

USE DIVIDERS

Lock the points of the dividers at the width of the baluster plus the width of the space. Touch one point to the starting mark and "walk" it around point by point until you reach the end. You should finish up exactly one baluster width from the end line. If you end short or long, adjust the dividers a small amount and try again. It might take a few tries. On the final, accurate pass, put a pencil mark on the rail as each point lands, corresponding to the side (edge) of each spindle or baluster.



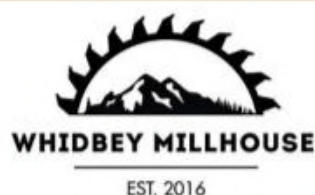
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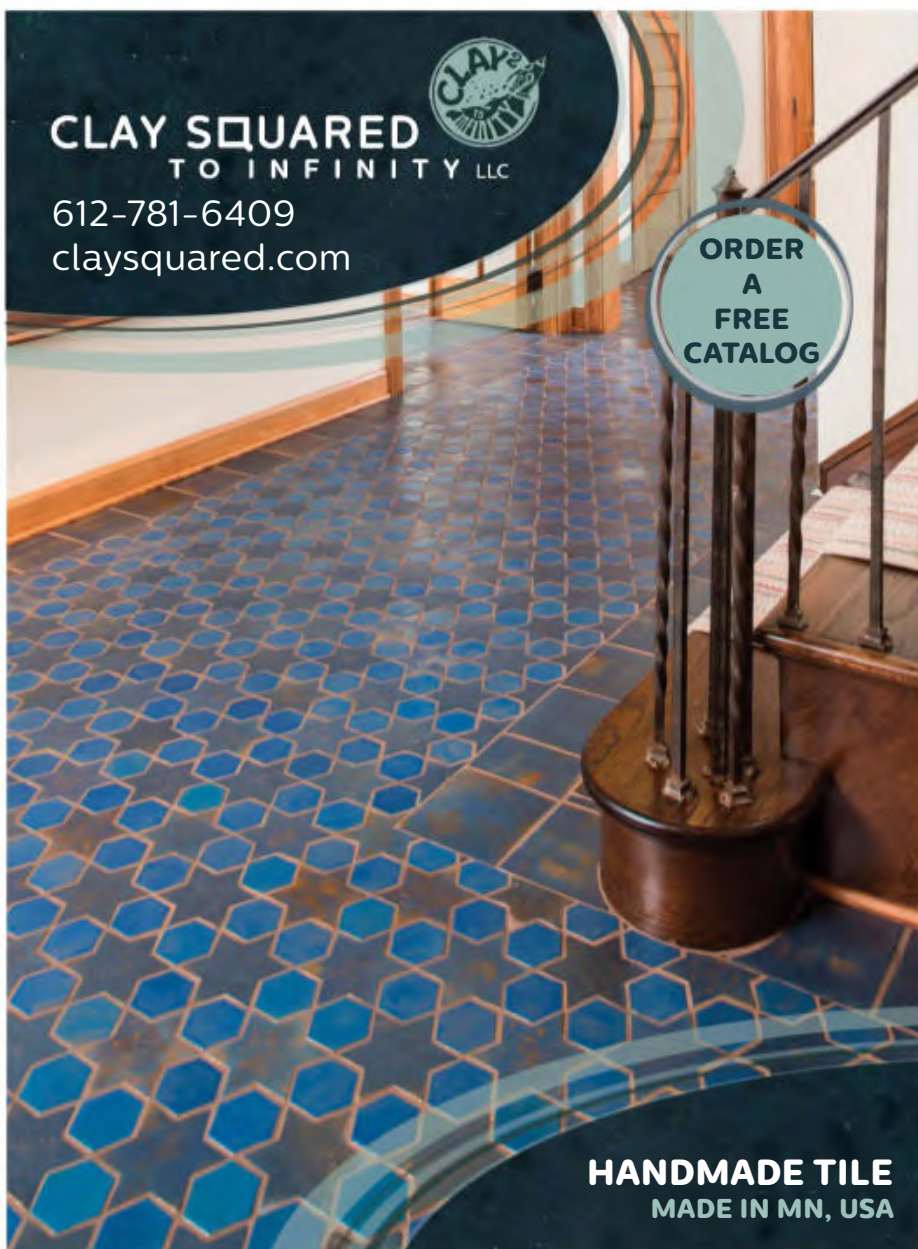
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Inside the Garden House at River Road Farm, where citrus and fig plants are over-wintered.

52

THE HOUSE A POTTERY BUILT
Brought back in a labor of love.
+ AMERICAN TERRA COTTA & TECO

60

A FITTING KITCHEN
An homage to Royal Barry Wills.
+ MOTIFS OF COLONIAL KITCHENS

66

AT RIVER ROAD FARM
Creating a series of garden rooms.
+ FORMAL ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS



The House that A POTTERY BUILT



William Day Gates, founder of an important terra-cotta tile and pottery company, built his retirement home in 1927. Decades later, it would take a knowledgeable Arts & Crafts collector to save the abandoned house in Illinois. Chicago architect John Eifler helped guide the restoration: “The house is a terra cotta and pottery catalog!” he says.

By Regina Cole / photographs by James Caulfield





TILE AND POTS AT HOME

Recent owner and magnanimous steward Tim Pearson, a long-time Arts & Crafts collector, amassed the assemblage of Teco pottery. A double door set into the bow-top window connects the outdoors with the entry to the house. Visitors come into a world of color and craftsmanship.

Three arches, supported by pilasters and columns encrusted with terra-cotta tiles, form a colonnade between living room and dining room. **OPPOSITE** Built in 1927, the house has a simple, symmetrical plan focused on an enormous two-storey room.

“Although the house was a mess,” says architect John Eifler, “the layout and many key elements were intact. The enormous window and several eyebrow windows remained. Much of the wood needed replacement, but original glass survived. We found boxes of tiles”



RIGHT Architect John Eifler wonders how the terra cotta was applied to round columns, between the main rooms; he is glad they've survived intact.

LEFT The fireplace is the living room's focal point, opposite the large window and under the upstairs gallery. Fireplace and floor tiles came from Gates' factory. So did the "Teco green" pottery that owner Tim Pearson collected.



W

HEN, IN 1927, William Day Gates built his retirement home, in Crystal Lake, about 50 miles northwest of Chicago, he aptly named it "Trails End." Gates, the founder and president of the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Co., apparently used whatever materials were lying around at the factory. He lavishly applied tiles inside and out and even used packing materials in the structure of the house itself (see p. 57).

Gates' Illinois company made architectural terra cotta for more than 8,000 buildings in the United States and Canada, among them the so-called "jewel-

box" banks designed by Louis Sullivan, Chicago's Carson Pirie Scott & Co. department store, buildings by Wright and by Purcell & Elmslie, and the Wrigley Building. His company also made Teco pottery.

It was therefore fitting that, after Trails End had stood uninhabited and neglected, the house was discovered, in 2008, by a passionate collector of Arts & Crafts furniture and pottery—especially Teco pottery.

"I first worked with Tim Pearson when he hired me to restore the 1911 Frank Lloyd Wright Balch House, in Oak Park," says Chicago-based architect John Eifler.



“Tim, the CFO of a big construction firm, had a huge Teco collection. He was one of the few people who saw this house’s value. It was in very rough shape by the time he found it.”

“It was being sold as a tear-down,” says Julie Pearson. “Tim couldn’t get a mortgage because the house had no heat, no electricity; it was uninhabitable.”

Tim and Julie spent a decade restoring the house, living off-site for the first eight

years. John Eifler headed up a project that stabilized the 2,200-square-foot structure; built a new roof; installed copper gutters; added a bathroom; turned two small bedrooms into a large primary suite; installed new electric, heating, cooling, and plumbing systems; and replaced a lot of rotted wood.

“Although the house was a mess, it had its original layout and many key elements were intact,” Eifler says. “An enormous,

arched living-room window and several eyebrow windows remained. Much of the wood needed replacement, but most of the original glass survived. As for the living and dining rooms: they are a veritable terra-cotta catalog!”

Gates used his company’s colorful products for the vast living-room floor and the projecting fireplace mantel and surround, for pilasters and columns, to decorate outdoor elements including a

RIGHT In the dining room, a live-edge, white-oak table keeps company with Teco pots. Owner Tim Pearson made the table when the tree came down in a storm; the same tree supplied wood for the chandelier.

BELOW RIGHT The soaring living room has a colorful tiled floor, a huge bow-top window, and, under lofty beams, soft stenciling.

INSET An early photo shows how authentic is the restoration. **OPPOSITE** The entry doors in the big window center on the fireplace.



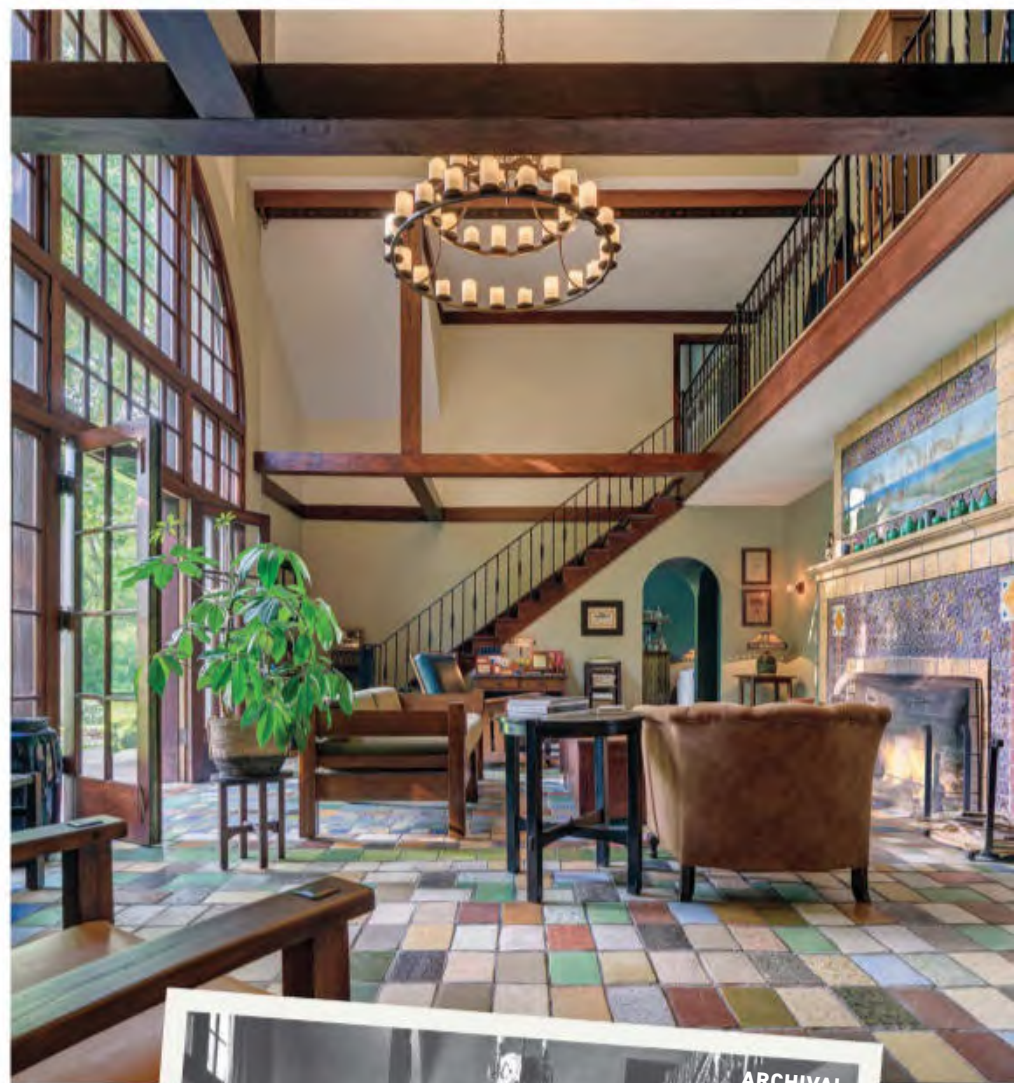
STRAW-BALE CONSTRUCTION is nothing new

Sea grass was used as the packing material to ship pottery and architectural terra cotta from William Gates' factory. Tough and resilient, it protected the fired clay from blows during transit. It also was used, like other coastal grasses, to insulate homes. • "Apparently, they had tons of the stuff lying around the factory," says John Eifler. "They pressed the sea grass into 18" x 14" x 6" bricks with holes, then poured in concrete to make it solid. They built the house of these bricks. Then the exterior was stuccoed and the interior plastered."

• Eifler admits he was not confident at first of the material's structural soundness; he thought that, after 80-plus years, walls would have to be dismantled and reframed in wood. To his surprise, the compressed sea grass-block walls are in great shape: "Perfectly plumb, sound, as good as new."



Surrounding the Gates house was a beautiful, terraced landscape replete with trellises and tiled structures.





ABOVE A pretty, tiled bridge spanned a small pond when the house was new. Today, it crosses water released by the geothermal system. **LEFT** (from top) One exterior tile draws on classical motifs. • Julie Pearson added a tile in her husband's honor. • A frieze of landscape tiles ornaments the chimney breast. Said to be very valuable, it had been painted over when Tim Pearson bought Trails End, in 2008. He painstakingly, by hand, removed the paint. • Pearson was a passionate and knowledgeable collector of antique furniture and Teco pottery. Much of his Gustav Stickley furniture and pottery was purchased over the years at the annual Arts & Crafts Conference, at the Grove Park Inn, in Asheville, N.C.

small bridge, and as punctuation marks on the house's exterior.

"The interior is full of tiles dating to 1923," Eifler says. "But there's more tile everywhere and even three boxes of blue tile that was never used. Some of the technique is lost: For instance, when you fire clay, it shrinks a little. So how did they make the columns between the living room and dining room? The columns are round, encased in tile, without gaps. We don't know how they did that."

"The tile that depicts a landscape, over the fireplace mantel, is very valuable," he continues. "When we first got here, it had been painted over."

Eifler's right hand in the work was Jonathan Leck, a Minneapolis-based artisan who builds and sells Arts & Crafts-style lighting fixtures; restores woodwork, stone, and tile; and, as a specialty, has acted as a consultant in the

restoration of several Frank Lloyd Wright houses, including Fallingwater.

"This was a beautiful project!" Leck recalls, "—although, when I arrived, plaster was falling off the ceiling. This house is one of a kind. Tim Pearson did a lovely thing when he saved this house."

Pearson's furniture collection includes original Stickley settees and Morris chairs, fumed-oak bookcases with leaded-glass doors, through-tenon lamp tables—and a live-edge table he himself built from a white oak that came down in a storm. Furnished rooms make a splendid backdrop for a singular collection of Teco pots, many in the signature Teco matte-green color.

Sadly, Tim Pearson contracted Covid-19 and passed away in 2022. His widow, Julie, lives at Trails End today. "It's so fitting that his lifetime collection should be here," she says. "The Teco came home."

AMERICAN TERRA COTTA—AND TECO

HOW ARCHITECTURAL ORNAMENT BEGAT COLLECTIBLE POTTERY. **By Patricia Poore**



Architect John Eifler guided restoration of the tile-rich house that was the home of William Day Gates, founder of the American Terra Cotta & Ceramic Company. Eifler's work on Trails End brings him full circle: "I grew up with a kid whose grandfather was Fritz Wagner, the modeler who became vice president of American Terra Cotta," he reveals. • Louis Sullivan, mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright and often considered the father of modern architecture, figures in this story. At one point he worked at American Terra Cotta with renowned modeler Kristian Schneider. Together they developed the sinuous designs in terra cotta that became known as Sullivanesque ornament.

William Day Gates (1853–1935) was practicing law in Chicago when he returned to the Crystal Lake area of his childhood and invested in a tile works making bricks and drain tiles. In 1887, fire destroyed that factory. Gates rebuilt it, rebranding the company American Terra Cotta & Ceramic—the country's first manufactory of architectural terra cotta: fireproof, versatile in color and texture, less expensive than stone. It was used to ornament the outside of buildings, from skyscrapers to movie theaters.

By 1895 Gates and company were experimenting with clays and glazes for art pottery. Some sources suggest that firing pots was a way to increase profits, as the pots filled spaces between the large, architectural elements in the kiln. Teco pottery (from a contraction of terra + cotta) was introduced commercially in 1902, gaining immediate favor with Prairie School architects. Just Art Pottery, a collectors' site, says that architects Sullivan, Wright, and Elmslie designed Teco pots, though Gates himself was responsible for many of the 500 forms eventually produced.

Gates was influenced by the progressive philosophies of the time, including the Arts & Crafts Movement and concern over factory work conditions. According to the Crystal Lake Historical Society, "The factory employed hundreds of local



men, many of whom were immigrants from ... Sweden, Norway, Ireland, and Germany." A 1915 newspaper article describes the company and its eponymous town this way: "Terra Cotta is a melting pot where the knowledge of all that is finest in art and architecture, chemistry and science, is through the magic touch of genius, transformed into building materials and pottery that rank among the highest examples of ceramic art." As with Stickley's factory, the work was a practical compromise between handcraft and mass production.

The smooth, micro-crystalline, matte glaze often called Teco Green was developed early and independently of the similar glaze used by Grueby. Samples of the ornamental terra-cotta work can be spotted in Chicago, including the Wrigley Building, and in downtown Crystal Lake.

more information

- "AMERICAN TERRA COTTA," Crystal Lake Historical Society: cl-hs.org
- "ABOUT TECO POTTERY," Just Art Pottery: justartpottery.com
- "PRAIRIE SCHOOL POTTERY," Chicago Reader: chicagoreader.com
- "TECO POTTERY HISTORY": artpotteryblog.com
- "TECO POTTERY": wikipedia.org

The company's archive is housed at the University of Minnesota.



CENTER Modeler Kristian Schneider stands with a clay model to be used to cast a negative for production of terra cotta for a building designed by Louis Sullivan. Schneider was sought after by American Terra Cotta, Northwestern Terra Cotta, and other competitors in part because of his association with Sullivan. **RIGHT** Vase designed by William Day Gates and manufactured by Gates Potteries (aka Teco Pottery), ca. 1901–22. At 22" tall, it was marketed as a container for umbrellas and walking sticks.

A NEW KITCHEN

WITH A PRESERVATION ETHIC

Before 1994, when she fell in love with and bought this house, Sarah Blank hadn't heard of Royal Barry Wills. Then she learned that the Cape, built in 1957, in New Canaan, Connecticut, was typical of the work of the famous Colonial Revival architect who was a prolific designer as well as America's best-selling architectural writer. A Massachusetts native who opened his Boston firm in 1925, Wills loved New England's small, historic houses and made a specialty of designing updated yet authentically proportioned versions of Capes, saltboxes, and garrison colonials. Hundreds of his houses stand, including the 1500-square-foot Cape that Blank proceeded to enlarge.

BY REGINA COLE | PHOTOGRAPHS BY CURTIS LEW

"I NEEDED A BIGGER, updated kitchen, a bigger garage, and more bedrooms and baths," says the interior designer, who is based in Greenwich with offices in Palm Beach, Florida, and New York City. "I am passionate about classicism and its vocabulary, and this house was an important learning experience for me. To guide the additions, I used the book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England*, published by Thomas Hubka, in 1984."

Blank added a second storey to the house's central block and a rear addition to house a new primary bedroom suite and an enlarged living room. She added a mudroom and breezeway telescoping towards a new garage along one side and, on the opposite side of the house, she transformed the old kitchen and garage ell into a new kitchen. "The house grew to 4500 square feet. The kitchen, which had measured 10 x 12 feet, is now 16 x 18 feet," Blank says.

She is especially proud of the kitchen that she says reflects her appreciation for historic New England design and specifically for the work of Royal Barry Wills. She designed the room and the millwork, blending salvage, carefully chosen new elements, reproductions, and antiques collected piece by piece. The 18th-century, brown Delft tiles that line the backsplash, for example, took Sarah years to assemble: "I bought them one by one."



ABOVE The original house was one storey. Designer Sarah Blank has added a second floor, a rear addition, and a breezeway and mudroom. Gardens are planted with hydrangeas, salvia, rue, echinacea, and other perennials, in cottage-garden style. **OPPOSITE** The kitchen sink is six feet long, made of Verdi Quasai granite given a leathered finish. The same material is used for the countertops.

COURTESY SARAH BLANK (EXTERIOR)



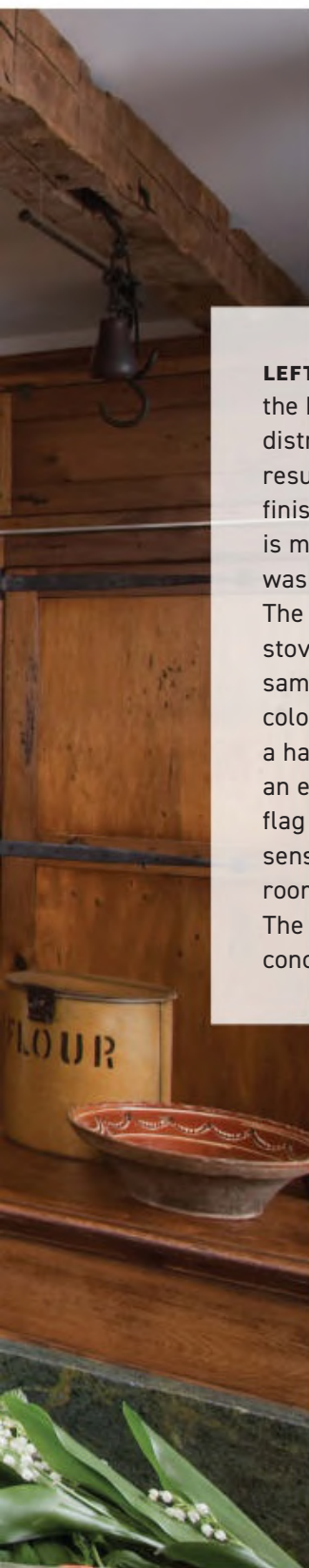


She repurposed gumwood from an antique barn to use for the kitchen floor. The ceiling has chestnut beams from a demolished house. Long before it became all the rage, Blank applied shiplap boards to the walls.

The island sink is six feet long, made from granite that she treated to a leathered finish. In the dining room, she put slim strapping on the ceiling and painted it, the moulding, the base-board, and the chair rail in a putty color that softly contrasts with the white walls. "I was inspired by [the Colonial Revival architect] Stanford White, who often did that in back rooms as a way to separate spaces with low ceilings."

Sarah Blank commissioned the reproduction of a Jacobean table for the dining room and, for the kitchen wall, found a 1905 American flag that once flew on a ship. Canvas floorcloths, barley-twist candlestick lamps of English oak, and pewter on a Welsh cupboard suit the Colonial Revival sensibility. Not slavish yet a deft homage, the design of the new spaces truly reflects the sensibility of Royal Barry Wills.





LEFT Made of butternut, the kitchen cabinets were distressed and then stained, resulting in a soft, hand-rubbed finish. The hood over the range is made from custom, acid-washed, standing-seam metal. The wall and shelf behind the stove are fashioned from the same material. **BELOW** Sepia-colored, 18th-century Delft tiles, a hand-painted floorcloth, and an early-20th-century American flag reinforce the Colonial sensibility. **RIGHT** The new mud-room also functions as a pantry. The floor is slate; cabinets here conceal a steam oven.



Over time, the original house and new appendages grew from 1500 square feet to 4500—all of the additions designed in keeping with Wills' revival vision.

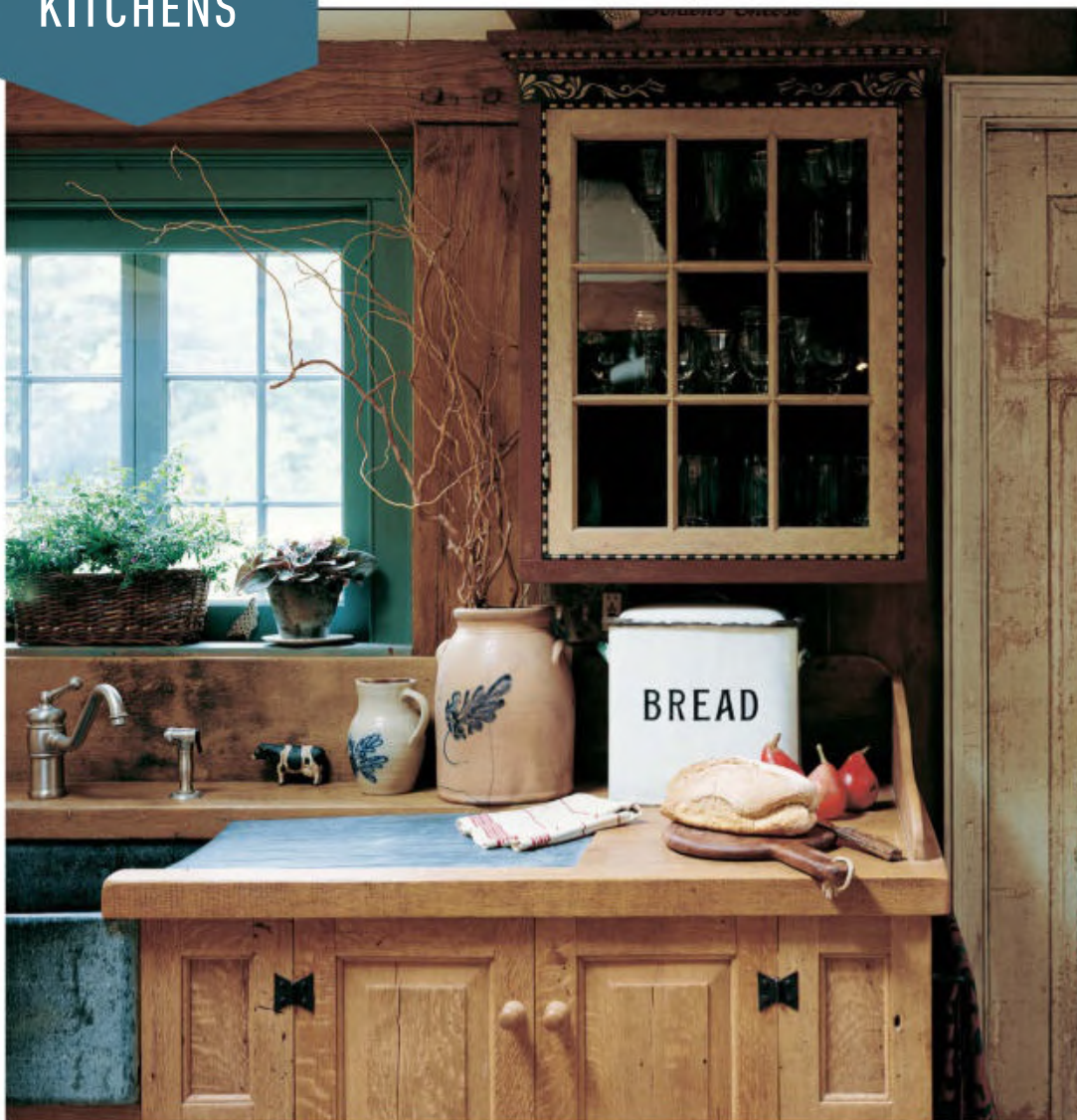


Making Cabinets Look Old

The cabinetry in Sarah Blank's kitchen is configured along contemporary lines—wrapping around a wall oven; hiding a built-in refrigerator; housing below-counter drawers, a wine refrigerator, and cupboards; hanging above counters and beside sink and stove. Yet they strike no discordant note in this kitchen designed to look old. Carefully chosen reproduction hardware, a simple raised-panel design, and crown moulding complement the wood

species of the cabinets.

It's butternut. Sometimes called white walnut, butternut is a softwood historically favored for cabinets and furniture and for woodcarving. Before these cabinets were hung in Blank's kitchen, faux finisher Gina Neto hand-distressed the surfaces. She then treated them with products from Sutherland Welles, Ltd., a Rhode Island company specializing in polymerized tung oil. It makes for "a non-toxic, beautiful, durable, and lasting finish."



MOTIFS OF THE COLONIAL STYLES

DESIGN CONVENTIONS FOR EARLY & REVIVAL HOMES. By Patricia Poore



The 20th-century architect Royal Barry Wills was intrigued by the scale and details of early New England houses. Those he designed were not replicas, however; they had to accommodate indoor plumbing, closets, central heat, and an electric kitchen. Some of his commissions emphasize Colonial-era authenticity while others are a lightened, Colonial Revival interpretation. The same is true of the diverse yet period-inspired kitchens shown on these pages.

The “Colonial” kitchen is of course a 20th-century convention. Owners of very early houses often restore the original kitchen, with its huge fireplace, as a keeping room/parlor, then incorporate a plain, functional kitchen—perhaps one with Colonial, Federal, or Greek Revival-era cabinetwork—into a wing or ell. Don’t fall under the spell of trends you see in kitchen showrooms: Surprisingly, a period-inspired kitchen that goes with the house is less likely to become dated.

Rely on natural materials such as wood

and stone. For cues to designing cabinets and millwork as well as flooring, look to the dining room or better yet the pantry. Hints may come from an intact house in the same town or from a museum house. Try to use only those period details and materials related to the style and date of your house—modern appliances excepted.

Some owners go out of their way to hide appliances in custom cabinets or a pantry. Others prefer a frankly modern kitchen, combining function with the use of period-appropriate elements, antiques,

and colors. Here are some hallmarks, conventions, and motifs to guide the design of a new-old kitchen:

- **AN UNFITTED ROOM** Rather than using long runs of identical base and wall-hung cabinets, combine a few built-ins with a freestanding hutch, worktable, or open shelves. Make it look as if the room evolved over time. Add the semblance of a hearth with an actual fireplace, a niche or a “mantelshelf” over the range top, or a prominent cookstove. Consider building a smaller kitchen proper along with such



GRIDLEY+GRAVES (FAR LEFT & OPP. RIGHT); ROB GRAY (TOP RIGHT); ERIC ROTH (CTR.); NEIL LANDING FOR SARAH BLANK DESIGN STUDIO (OPP. LEFT)



separate, accessory spaces as a food pantry (like an old butt'ry), a butler's pantry, even a back hall to stash a larger refrigerator or an extra oven.

- **OLD STANDARDS** Appropriate floorings include wood, brick, and stone. Wood cabinets, painted or clear-finished, should be of simple design. Period reproductions are readily available for hardware and lighting fixtures. A historical color palette and vintage serving ware help back-date the space.

- **THE LOOK OF AGE** To recall a 17th- or an early-18th-century room, you might use dark-stained, reclaimed, or pecky wood. Add age with glazes and distressing methods. Although stainless steel is elemental and blends with any design, stone and enamel and iron are more of the period and take on a patina.

- **COLONIAL REVIVAL?** Conversely, you can keep it light by using the conventions of a later, adapted Colonial style. Whether designed for a house built in 1800 or in 1925, these kitchens incorporate upper cabinets and even an island. Cabinets are often painted in an off-white (buttermilk, ivory, tan) enamel.



ABOVE In a Royal Barry Wills house, the kitchen was redesigned with sensitivity, the cooktop set into a hearth-like alcove and a butler's pantry in the addition. **TOP LEFT** Sarah Blank Design Studio married old brick, an iron fireback, and European details for a new house in a Colonial-era town.

OPPOSITE (from left) A scoop-front soapstone sink and blacksmith-made hardware add period appeal in the former summer kitchen of a ca. 1816 house. • In a rural 1790 farmhouse, the simple cabinet with butterfly hinges hides the dishwasher. • Simplicity and distressing suit a 1730 house.



The two-room Potager Garden is beyond a stone wall with the main garden gate. **OPPOSITE** (bottom) The front Terrace Garden has catnip, St. John's Wort, *Verbascum*, Japanese aster, and *Baptisia*. Stone steps lead to a birch allée and to The Temple (not shown), a place for intimate dinners.

- (far right) Outbuildings were designed by owner Bill Reynolds. The old house is seen in the background.

at River Road Farm

Uncultivated land around an 18th-century farmhouse slowly became a series of garden rooms, formal but not overly structured. **STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARYN B. DAVIS**

Robb Nestor and Bill Reynolds looked at over 200 houses before buying a 1732 center-chimney Colonial, on 11 uncultivated acres in Connecticut. • “I desperately wanted a ‘garden room’ so we kept looking for a house with one, then realized we’d have to create it ourselves,” Robb says. “When we found the property, we knew this was it. It spoke to us; we saw its potential.” • When they began their search for a retirement home, the couple were living in Atlanta, where Robb had a successful landscape-design business. Initially they looked in Georgia and Tennessee—until Bill stumbled across the book *The Garden Room: Bringing Nature Indoors*, by Timothy Mawson. The book showcases many Connecticut scenes. The couple found those so appealing, they headed north, to Robb’s home state, looking for locations from the book. “That book brought us to Connecticut and to our house,” Bill says.

Over a three-year period, the two shuttled from Georgia to Connecticut on weekends, each time packing a 26-foot truck with plant materials, garden ornaments, and interior furnishings. “It was 16-hour drive back and forth but the advantage was we had that time to talk about the garden,” Bill says.

“And seeing the place with fresh eyes every time we returned helped us with the full picture—what we wanted, what was working and what wasn’t,” Robb adds.

The vision for the garden, which now flows seamlessly from one space into the next across three cultivated acres, began with the Perennial Garden. They placed a fountain in the middle as the focal point because the house overlooks this swath of land. The rest of the gardens evolved around it.



GARDENS Each outdoor “room” is a garden in itself, with its own palette and a distinctive ambiance. The serene Pool Garden is quiet and green with an absence of strong color. The Potager Garden is complex with several structures, a stone wall, and a water feature. Vegetables, herbs, and flowers grow amidst clipped boxwood arranged in geometric patterns. Stone steps then lead under a rose-covered arbor, the entrance to the Perennial Garden, where a lovely garden house provides summer shade. Seeds, tools, and garden journals are stored within.

BELOW Strong geometry and ornamental cabbages distinguish the second room of the formal Potager Garden. **RIGHT** (top) A rose-covered archway leads towards the Perennial Garden, which is centered on a fountain. (center) A sweet Garden House in the Perennial Garden is a place for recording the seasons in garden journals.





FAVORITE WOODLAND

Of all the gardens this couple have built, the Woodland Garden has become their favorite. It runs the length of the property—behind the house, the pool, and the Perennial Garden. It comprises a series of fern-covered paths bordered by trees. It was originally a tangled, unpassable thicket. Robb and Bill worked tirelessly, clearing the land and then adding topsoil and worm castings before introducing shredded umbrella plant, different varieties of bergenia, sweet shrub, Mahonia berry, holly trees, weeping redbud, and others. They're proud they were able to "create something special from nothing" by finding the right vegetation to thrive in the shade. They say it was "like nurturing a child and finding out the kid turned out okay."

LEFT The Woodland Garden (seen beyond) runs the full length of the property. It is brimming with limelight hydrangeas, red-twig dogwood, *Heracleum* (cow parsley), and foxglove. **ABOVE** An overhead view of the main room in the Potager Garden, bordered by hedges and a stone wall, shows its pleasing geometry. **OPPOSITE** (bottom) In the Potager Garden, apple trees are espaliered on the stone wall.



LEFT This view takes in the Pool Garden and the colonnaded Potting Shed, which houses tools and supplies and where succulents and tropicals go for the winter.

The wood gate beyond leads to The Temple, which is used seasonally.

BELOW Tools, vases, and more used in the Potager Garden are stored in the Potager Mudroom.

BOTTOM The Citrus Terrace in a small courtyard next to the Garden House. Citrus and fig plants are stored inside for the winter.

“We wanted something a little dressy there. After that, everything else fell into place,” Robb says.

The couple didn’t adhere to a fixed garden plan. Instead, they allowed the garden to develop organically and creatively. Still, throughout the process, they were careful that the formal structure wouldn’t overpower the simplicity of the old farmhouse.

“We didn’t line everything up. We didn’t want it all on an axis,” says Robb. “Eventually, we added onto the Garden House and made a Citrus Garden. Then, to balance it out, we added the White Garden, ending up with another linear connection.”

Bill is a self-professed “frustrated architect” and lover of interior design. When he was designing outbuildings including The Temple, a seasonal, neoclassical outbuilding for intimate gatherings, he adhered to the same principles they’d applied to the garden. The building is classical in style but not too structured, keeping it in harmony with the surroundings.

The couple spend many dedicated and delightful hours tending and nurturing their garden, and claim they are obsessed with it. Bill, who grew up in Georgia enjoying his grandparents’ garden, views “maintenance” as a passion rather than a chore. He values having a creative outlet. “I met Robb when I was in the restaurant business,” Bill recalls. “We had a greenhouse at one of our restaurants and Robb tended the plants there—so plants brought us together.”

For Robb, joy comes from designing but also from experiencing the garden’s changing look. “There’s satisfaction when you do your job well and can sit back and appreciate it. Like being a writer or a painter,” he says.





LEFT A formal, compartmented parterre at the Victorian-era home Charlecote Park, in Warwickshire, based on plans dating to 1700.

a GLOSSARY

- **FOLLY** A garden structure designed for decoration, adding whimsy or romance.
- **HEDGE** A living fence or boundary formed by bushes or shrubs growing close together, often clipped. The hedge is used for decorative enclosure or for wind protection.
- **KNOT GARDEN** Traced to medieval England, a formal garden laid out in an intricate design, usually symmetrical and in a square frame or border. These typically showcase flowers or herbs. Designs resemble Celtic knots, with undulating hedge heights appearing to be woven. The effect requires constant maintenance. *See PARTERRE.*
- **LABYRINTH** A maze-like circuit that winds to a center and back out. The center may be open or contain a seat or garden ornament.
- **MAZE** Hedges and paths laid out to allow multiple means to a destination, typically with dead ends.
- **PARTERRE** A level, formal planting similar to a knot garden but without the interwoven effect. Flowerbeds are arranged in an ornamental design with paths between. Traditionally, border plants are permanent (hedges) while the plants so enclosed are annuals, vegetables, or herbs. May include colored gravels. Statues or small evergreens, often as topiary, mark points in the pattern.
- **TOPIARY** The art of clipping the foliage and twigs of evergreen shrubs, often box (*Buxus*) or yew (*Taxus baccata*), into shapes: geometric, spiraling, pyramid, even animal shapes. Also refers to the shrub or tree clipped into shape.

FORMAL ORNAMENTAL DESIGNS

EARLY GARDEN TYPES AGAIN IN FASHION. **By Patricia Poore**



It's debatable whether parterres are a flowery, French interpretation of English Tudor knot gardens, or if both forms descended from formal gardens of the French Renaissance, which featured compartments laid out in a pattern. In 17th-century Colonial America, the idea of formal patterns in the garden was mostly a Southern practice; New England Puritan gardens were more practical.

Parterres had a revival in the mid-19th century. These Victorian gardens were less formal than their predecessors and featured flowerbeds. Typically, clipped evergreen hedges (often box) edge the beds and create a pattern. Beds are filled with flowers, especially annuals, which can be replanted according to the season. Areas in between are pathways for strolling. Parterres generally are found in larger gardens and located near the house.

A knot garden is a formal design usually contained within a square frame, which might be a hedge, a wall, or a fence planted

with vines. In a true knot garden, hedges have different heights and appear to cross each other or undulate, like Celtic knot patterns. These gardens require a good plan drawn to scale and lots of maintenance.

Gravel mulch (or sand, or grass) is used as a backdrop to make the pattern stand out. Knot gardens were planted strategically to be viewed from an upstairs window. Knot gardens are especially charming for Colonial-era and Tudor Revival houses.

When evergreens are used to create the patterns and with the addition of colored gravels, parterres and knot gardens offer year-round interest, even when the plant beds are dormant.

Today's geometric plantings can be designed to require less maintenance. A weed suppressant mat may be placed under the gravel base of the garden. A mix of perennials and annuals cuts down on planting time. It's possible to create patterns for such shade plants as hostas, astilbes, and even impatiens as a groundcover.

PLANTS for the knot structure Historically most typical: hyssop, grey or green santolina, teucrium, winter savory, artemisia, juniper, thyme, thrift. Also consider: lavender, dianthus, basil, rosemary, sage, rue, sweet woodruff.

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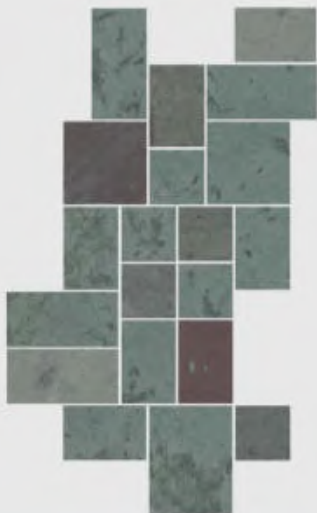
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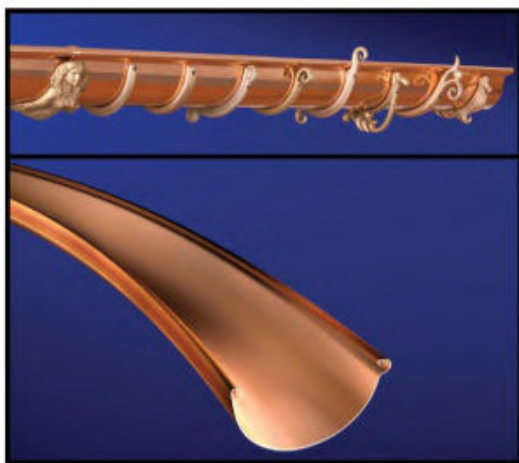


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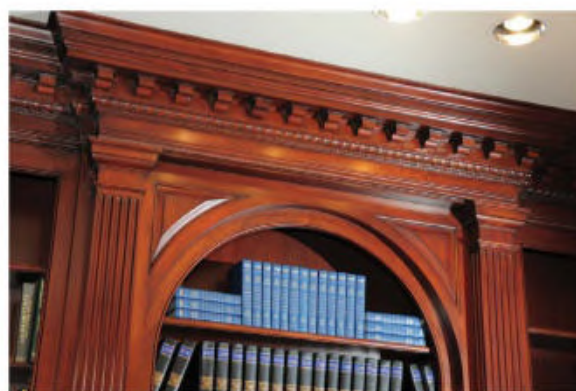
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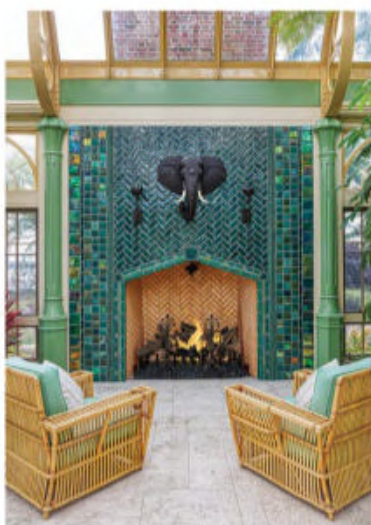
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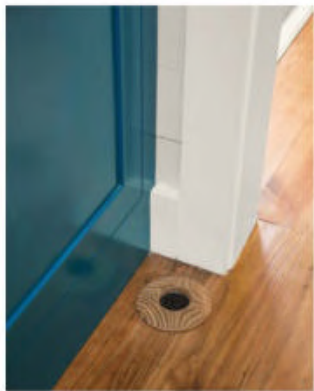
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LANDSCAPING **Landscapes by Lou**, Montville, NJ: landscapesbylou.com
SIDING/SHINGLES **James Hardie**, jameshardie.com
ROOF **Timberline by GAF**, gaf.com
WINDOWS **Architectural Series Pella**, pella.com
TRIM **PVC CertainTeed**, certainteed.com
DOORS (antique) **Recycling The Past**, Barnegat, NJ: recyclingthepast.com
FRENCH AND SLIDING DOORS **Andersen**, andersenwindows.com
TILE (foyer) cement with brass inlay **Cemento Collection**, cementocollection.com
MURAL PAINTING **Heather Jozak Studios**, heatherjozakstudios.com
KITCHEN DESIGNER **Meredith Weiss**/"BRIGHTEN" line **Merri Interiors**, Commack, NY: merriinteriors.com
COUNTERTOPS **porcelain SapienStone**, sapienstone.com
BISTRO CHAIRS **Kenian**, kenian.com
LIGHTING (vintage) **Canvas House Antiques & Design Center**, Point Pleasant, NJ: facebook.com/canvashouseantiques
HARDWARE (vintage) **Amighini Architectural**, Jersey City: amighini.net
KITCHEN KNOBS **Top Knobs**, topknobs.com

Related Resources

Chadsworth, columns.com
Decorative & structural columns in wood, fiberglass, Polystone
TimberBuild, timberbuild.com
Exterior brackets, millwork, cedar building components

ORIGINAL BUILT-INS

p. 21 **WALLPAPER** **Adelphi Paper Hangings**, adelphiaperhangings.com
p. 22 (top) **DESIGNER** **David Heide Design Studio**, dhdstudio.com (btm.) **WALLPAPER** **Adelphi Paper Hangings**, adelphiaperhangings.com
MUSEUM **Capt. Elias Davis House**, ca. 1804, **Cape Ann Museum**, Gloucester, MA: capeannmuseum.org
p. 25 (kitchen) **MUSEUM** **Lanternman House**, La Canada Flintridge, CA: lanternmanhouse.org (bath)
MUSEUM **Haas-Lilienthal House**, 1886, San Francisco: haas-lilienthalhouse.org

Related Resources

Architectural Components, architecturalcomponentsinc.com
Custom wood millwork, windows, doors
Crown Point Cabinetry, crown-point.com
Custom, period-inspired cabinetry & built-ins
Driwood Moulding, driwood.com
Hardwood mouldings in more than 500 profiles

CRAFTSMAN KITCHEN

CABINETS **Crown Point Cabinetry**, crown-point.com
ARCHITECT **Louis Wasserman**, Milwaukee: louiswasserman.com
BUILDER **Dahlman Construction**, Milwaukee: dahlmancc.com
TILE 4x4 Owl in Lichen; 4x4 Nouveau 4-Dot in Lichen; 3x6 + 3x3 + 1x4 field tiles in Lichen; 1x1 tiles in Cedar (formerly Sepia) **Motawi Tileworks**, motawi.com
MISSION BAR STOOLS **Stickley**, stickley.com

Related Resources

BACKSPLASH TILE **Clay Squared to Infinity**, claysquared.com
Tile suitable for backsplashes
Copper Art Tiles, copperarttiles.com
Unique copper art tiles & cabinet pulls
Heritage Tile, heritagetile.com
Subway & other period-inspired tile designs
Motawi Tileworks, motawi.com
Arts & Crafts art tile for installations
Pewabic Pottery, pewabic.org
Custom art tile

THEY STILL MAKE: SIGNS

HISTORICAL HANDMADE SIGNS **Chatham Sign Shop**, Chatham, MA: (800) 547-4467, chathamsignshop.com
See p. 26
Lonborg Woodcarving, Halifax, MA: lonborgwoodcarving.com
Quarterboards & tavern signs, shaped, carved, gilded
David Calvo, Gloucester, MA: davidcalvo.com
Sculptor offering custom carving

PROBLEM FLOORS

FEATURED **Whidbey Millhouse**, whidbeymillhouse.com
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TOOLS & MATERIALS

Abatron, abatron.com
WoodEpox & LiquidWood for window repair
American Building Restoration Products, abrp.com
Cleaners, washes, polishes, and enhancers for wood & other surfaces
American Rope & Tar, tarsmell.com
Imported Swedish linseed oil, turpentine
Durham's Rock Hard Water Putty, waterputty.com
Wood repair putty
Earth+Flax Paints, earthandflax.com
Ottosson, Viking, Allback linseed-oil paints & products
Eco-Strip, eco-strip.com
Infrared paint removers, scraping tools
Epifanes, epifanes.com
Marine primers, paints & finishes for wood
Franmar, franmar.com
Blue Bear Soy-Gel paint/urethane stripper
Howard Products, howardproducts.com
Wood cleaners and revitalizer
Hyde, hydetools.com
Full line of paint prep tools, including scrapers, power washing equipment
Minwax, minwax.com
Stains & finishes for floors
Old Masters, myoldmasters.com
Stains & finishes
Pallman, us.pallman.net
Non-toxic water-borne finishes & cleaners for wood
Porter-Cable, portercable.com
Orbital sanders
Rubio Monocoat, rubiomonocoat.com
Natural pre-treatments

(aging, fuming) & finishes

Real Milk Paint, reallmilkpaint.com
Tung oil, "Half & Half" & other wood finishes
Sutherland Welles, sutherlandwelles.com
Polymerized tung oil, Old World stains
Sage Restoration, sage restoration.com
Allback linseed oil paints; natural cleaners
Titebond, titebond.com
Wood glues & caulks
Velvit Products, velvit products.com
Stains & oil finishes for wood flooring
Vermont Natural Coatings, vermontnaturalcoatings.com
All-natural floor finishes, stains & sealers
Waterlox Coatings, waterlox.com
Premium wood sealers, stains & finishes for counters, flooring, etc.
WOCA, wocawoodcare.com
Wood oil pre-treatments and finishes
WOOD FLOORING
Albany Woodworks, albany woodworks.com
Sustainable & antique heart pine, custom stairs
Bear Creek Lumber, bearcreeklumber.com
Douglas fir, Western red cedar, pine flooring & lumber
Carlson's Barnwood Co., carlsonsbarnwood.com
Antique & barnwood; dimensional lumber
Goodwin Co., heartpine.com
River-recovered heart pine & cypress; sustainable & engineered
Hull Forest Products, hullforest.com
Sawmill-direct wide plank
Old Wood Workshop, oldwoodworkshop.com
Antique flooring, vintage building materials, custom tables
Whidbey Millhouse, whidbeymillhouse.com
VG Douglas fir flooring, Douglas fir & pine wide-plank flooring

STAIR CARPETS

RUNNERS **Woodard & Greenstein**, woodardweave.com
Traditional rugs & runners based on historic designs; woven & hooked rugs
Thistle Hill Weavers, thistlehillweavers.com
Studio of textile expert Rabbit Goody offering Venetian, ingrain, other historical carpet
HARDWARE **Vintage Hardware & Lighting**, vintagehardware.com
Stair rods & dust corners

Related Resources

The Persian Carpet, persiancarpet.com
Handmade rugs incl. Arts & Crafts collection

SALVAGE IT

Metropolitan Artifacts, Atlanta, GA: metropolitanartifacts.com

DIY: POPCORN CEILINGS

Plaster Magic, plastermagic.com
Adhesive etc. for cracked plaster
United Gilsonite Laboratories, ugl.com
Drylok & other plaster patch & repair products

POTTERY HOUSE

ARCHITECT **John Eifler, Eifler Associates**, Chicago: eiflerassociates.com
RESTORATION **Jonathan P. Leck, J.P. Leck Design**, St. Paul, MN: jpleckdesign.com

Related Resources

A&C TILE **Clay Squared to Infinity**, claysquared.com
Handmade & period-style art tile
Motawi Tileworks, motawi.com
Handmade art tile for architectural installation
Pewabic Pottery, pewabic.org
Heirloom-quality art pottery & tile
COPPER GUTTERS
Classic Gutter Systems, classicgutters.com
Period-appropriate gutter systems & components
FURNITURE **Stickley**, stickley.com

PRESERVATION KITCHEN

DESIGNER/GC **Sarah Blank Design Studio**, sarahblankdesignstudio.com
FLOORING/PANTRY WALLS **Carlisle Wide Plank Floors**, wideplankflooring.com
FLOORCLOTHS **Canvasworks** (Lisa Curry Mair), canvasworksdesigns.com
HARDWARE **Horton Brasses**, horton-brasses.com
SINKS **Julien Sinks**, julien.ca
FAUCETS **Moen**, moen.com • (at stone sink)
KWC, kwc.com
COPPER LIGHTS (pantry) **PW Vintage Lighting**, Great Barrington, MA: (866) 561-3158
WELSH CUPBOARD **Stair Galleries**, stairgalleries.com
SOFA/DINING CHAIRS **Sam Blount Interior Design**, samblountinc.com
AMERICAN FLAG **antique Jeff R. Bridgman**, jeffbridgman.com
PAINT **kitchen walls waxed plaster; blue pantry cabinets custom mixed color, glazed**
Farrow & Ball, farrow-ball.com/en-us

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PERIOD KITCHENS **Crown Point Cabinetry**, crown-point.com
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Sheldon Slate, sheldonslate.com
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Vermont Soapstone, vermontsoapstone.com
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EARLY HARDWARE & LIGHTING **Acorn Mfg**, acornmfg.com
Hand-forged iron builder's hardware & strap hinges
Ball & Ball, ballandball.com
Authentic, hand-crafted reproductions of 17th- and 18th-century iron & brass hardware
Historic Housefitters, historichousefitters.com
Early period lighting & hardware
Period Lighting Fixtures, periodlighting.com
Handmade reproductions 1620-1850

RIVER ROAD FARM

Related Resources

Aeratis, aeratis.com
Rot-proof porch flooring etc. in solid extruded PVC
Chadsworth Inc., columns.com
Custom architectural columns
Country Carpenters/Early New England Homes, countrycarpenters.com
Outbuildings in Colonial & early American styles



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Our long-time reader Judy Murray explains that her street photo (top) shows a neat tract east of Detroit, along Lake St. Clair, one of many neighborhoods built here in the 1950s and '60s. Modest houses sit on similar lots, with the same setbacks and similar construction. Nevertheless, they're not cookie-cutter; façades vary, porches and windows differ, some houses have shutters. This consistency creates a welcoming harmony for residents and their visitors.

When one of the houses was sold, the new owners received a permit to “add a second storey and expand the existing mudroom.” Look what happened!



“Result of a Picasso–Dali collaboration.”

—paraphrasing Patrick Chefalom

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