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OCTOBER 2023



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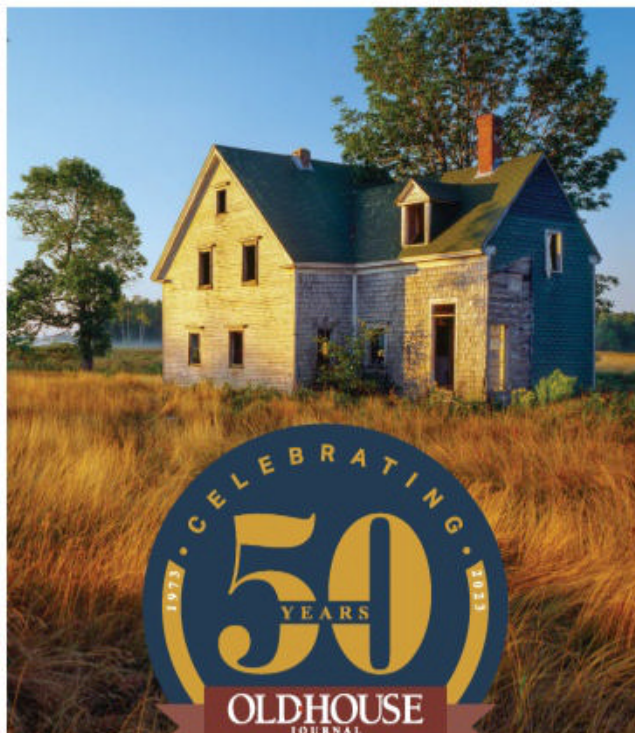
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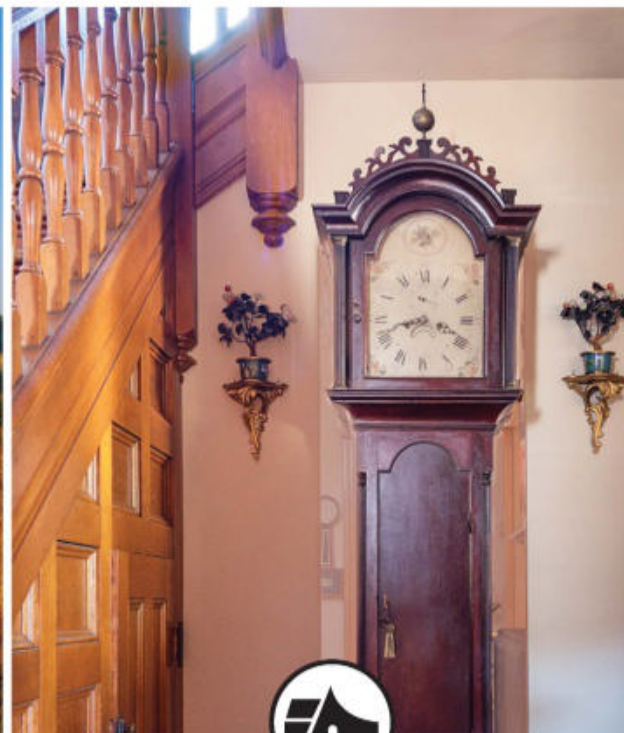
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PHOTO BY BLACKSTONEEDGE.COM SEE PAGE 39.

So many stories to tell...



THE NATIONAL MAGAZINE that started as a newsletter for Brooklyn brownstoners, in 1973, is celebrating a milestone birthday. Though it's been only 45 years for me (!), I have been swept into the nostalgia—for those old, typed issues punched with three binder holes, for the thousands of houses we've covered, and especially for the people I've met. Some have passed, others are still contributing, many are part of the new generation leaning toward restoration. In its full-of-promise “before” state or after restoration, whether a low-ceilinged shingled Colonial or an opulent limestone chateau: old houses are wonderful. So is this

cohort of folks who live by the commitment to leave things better than they found them.

OHJ isn't the biggest or most famous of the shelter books or TV shows, but we do have longevity and influence. Besides our devoted subscribers, many of whom have been reading for decades, the right people have paid attention to our *bon mots* and breakthroughs into new territory. For example, have you ever heard a casual reference to “remuddling” (that is, unfortunate or comical remodeling)? How about the popular house style the American Foursquare? Both were coined by *Old-House Journal* more than 40 years ago... and, along with many of the publication's core tenets, entered the mainstream.

Remarkably, our editorial mission has remained consistent, not only in the subjects we cover but also in our philosophy. (Don't destroy good old work. Be true to the house.) Since the start, OHJ has covered DIY conservation and repair; articles on materials and techniques to help owners making purchase decisions and hiring contractors; house styles; sensitive renovation; period-inspired interiors. The newsletter for urban homesteaders grew into a magazine that embraced Victorian houses nationwide, then bungalows and

houses of the Arts & Crafts era, and finally mid-century ranches. We've written about everything from repairing flat roofs and paint-stripping to snaking wires and building a circular tower, re-creating a 1930s kitchen and planting an heirloom garden. OHJ has absorbed *Old-House Interiors*, which I published from 1994 to 2013, to showcase restored houses alongside the nitty-gritty.

As the cover of Vol. I, No. 1 proclaimed: Old Houses Are a Way of Life. Living with an appreciation for the past changes your life. If you have an old house, you know it's endless. We'll never run out of subject matter.



To celebrate with us and see more, visit: oldhouseonline.com/50-years

SIDE NOTES

A QUICK OHJ TIMELINE

The brownstone newsletter was founded in 1973 by Clem Labine, in Brooklyn. Patricia Poore joined the staff in the late 1970s, becoming Clem's partner, then owner and publisher in 1988. OHJ moved to Gloucester, Massachusetts.

Sister publication *Old-House Interiors* debuted in 1994. *Early Homes* (since reabsorbed into OHJ) came along in 2004, *Arts & Crafts Homes* in 2005. *The Old-House Journal Buyer's Guide Catalog* (the first directory of renovation/restoration products and companies) morphed into our *Renovation Lookbook*. OHJ had a couple of owners before becoming part of AIM, Active Interest Media, who purchased its sister magazines in 2009. Meanwhile, Clem Labine went on to start the trade journals *Traditional Building* and *Period Homes*. All are now one family at AIM.

Early on, a critic said OHJ was like “advice over the backyard fence.” Well, in the quick-to-modernize Seventies, that's where good advice came from. We've also been called a bunch of cornballs. But who isn't corny when they're in love?



ABOVE Illustration for a bit on removing rodent urine from stored china, headlined “The Old-Mouse Urinal,” January 1984.



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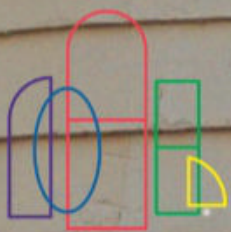
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Happy Birthday, House!

Gifts for the houses we own ... or wish we did! First up: Arts & Crafts, rustic to English (for Mary Ellen & Patricia) with contemporaneous favorites for Foursquares (Becky & Lori).

By Mary Ellen Polson

1. A SOFT GLOW

Alabaster lighting like the Palladian multi-stem pendant is an excellent choice for such traditional homes as Colonial Revivals and American Foursquares. The fluted bowl is 16" wide. Fixture available in 14 metal finishes; polished nickel shown: \$1,390. Brass Light Gallery, (800) 243-9595, brasslight.com

2. SPECIAL STRIPE

Xander is part of the new Well Kept Secret collection of hand-blocked textiles and digitally printed papers. The transitional paper is reminiscent of intricate striped papers of the 1920s. Shown in Ink, it comes in three other colors. It's \$281 per double roll. Stout Textiles, (215) 822-3388, stouttextiles.com

3. CONVERSATION PIECE

With a tufted upholstery top and studded nail detail, the Your Way Cocktail Ottoman is available in dozens of wood finishes and hundreds of upholstery fabrics. It's 18" x 37" wide x 37" deep. Quoted through dealers. Hancock & Moore, (828) 495-8235, hancockandmoore.com

4. FLIGHTS OF FANCY

"Return of the Swallows" is a new Arts & Crafts table round designed by textile artist Natalie Richards, available as a kit or a finished 24" round. The kit includes linen, marked design, and all silk and cotton threads: \$65. The finished round is \$485. Paint By Threads, (951) 545-7451, paint-by-threads.com



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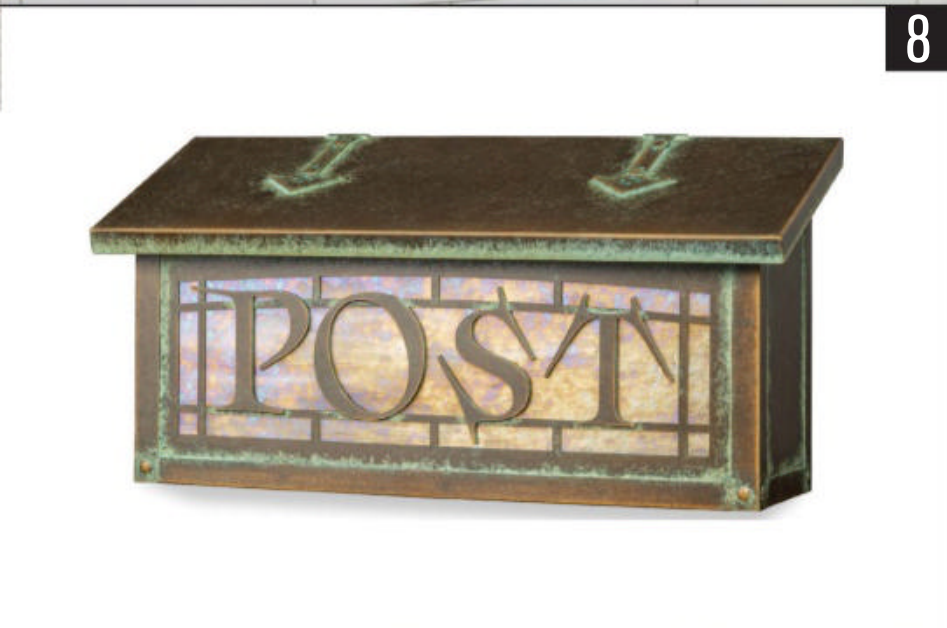
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5. DOUBLE HAMMER

The Iron Art double-hammered knob passage set suits dwellings from true Colonials to Arts & Crafts or Tudor Revival. The 2"-wide knob is backed by a round rose 3" in diameter. The forged-iron set is finished in matte black; \$413 per set. Acorn Manufacturing, (508) 339-4500, acornmfg.com

6. THE STANDARD, STILL

The perfect wall finish for an early-20th-century bath is classic, flush-edge subway tile with pencil-thin grout lines, in an authentic shade of not-quite white. Offered in a full line of period-correct field tile and glaze; pricing through dealers. Subway Ceramics, (888) 387-3280, subwaytile.com

7. FINISHING TOUCH

Personalize your address with hand-cast 4x4 art tiles in white on black or black on white. Mount them in a weatherproof frame with Arts & Crafts accent tiles. Five-tile frame: \$140. Number tiles: \$38 each. Accent tiles: \$44 to \$57. Motawi Tileworks, (734) 213-0017, motawi.com

8. NEW CENTURY

The 1903 Edwardian mailbox features distinctive applied strapping and stylized lettering suggestive of English Arts & Crafts. It comes in a choice of finishes and art glass and measures 15" wide x 8 1/4" high x 5 3/4" deep: \$295 and up. Old California, (800) 577-6679, oldcalifornia.com

9. FOR YOUR PORCH

Start from one of dozens of patterns (this is based on the "Old Fashion" design) and customize a screen door to your exact specifications in such fine woods as Spanish cedar, cherry, or African mahogany. Without glass inserts, \$579 and up. Vintage Doors, (800) 787-2001, vintagedoors.com

10. SMALL AND HANDY

Graced with Roycroft's signature orb, the Roycroft tabouret is the perfect accent table for small spaces. It measures 20" high x 16" wide x 16" deep. In solid oak, it's available in several finishes: \$908. Stickley, (315) 682-5500, stickley.com

Queen Anne Victorian

Our editor Brian Coleman and writer Dan Cooper own Victorians they've pushed toward Aesthetic/Eastlake.

1. BABY IN BRONZE

Suitable for a mantel or newel post, the Cherub Bronze with Torch stands 21" high; 13" wide x 10" deep. Cast using the lost-wax method, individual pieces are brazed together and hand-chased. The cherub weighs 15 lbs. \$425. Niagara Furniture, (717) 563-7764, niagarafurniture.com

2. PASSION FOR POMPEII

The Herter Brothers Tradition collection offers full roomsets inspired by classical Greek motifs. Elements include Passion Flower wall fill and Herter Dado, both shown in Pompeiian Burgundy. Fill: \$122 per single roll. Dado: \$55 per yard. Bradbury & Bradbury, (707) 746-1900, bradbury.com

3. SOPHISTICATED LACE

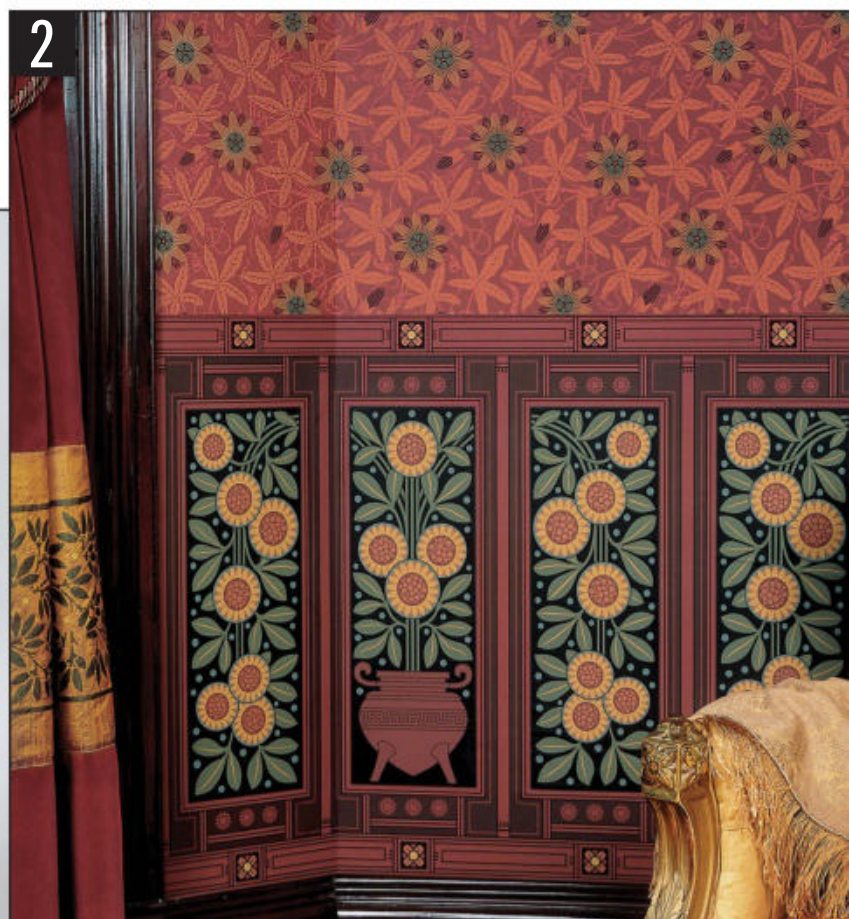
The Eastlake lace panel interprets Aesthetic Movement motifs found in Second Empire, Stick Style, and Queen Anne homes 1870–1890. Designed by Steve Bauer, the figured panels are 18" to 45" wide, with lengths up to 90": \$49 to \$225. Cooper Lace, (866) 447-8055, cooperlace.com

4. A FOREVER BOUQUET

Pressed flowers were highly prized by the Victorians. Preserve a treasured bouquet or your garden blossoms with bespoke pressing and framing. Select a frame design or shadow box, order, and follow instructions: \$335 and up. Pressed Floral, (801) 691-1821, pressedfloral.com

5. DEEPLY TUFTED

The Higgins Chesterfield sofa in aniline-dyed black leather is updated with a modern pocket coil-spring system and a slightly angled back for comfort. In upholstery or leather and in widths up to 145". An 85" wide sofa is \$2,449 and up. Roger + Chris, (855) 433-2233, rogerandchris.com





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Modern Ranch

Selections for our many friends and readers who have embraced mid-20th-century design.

1. TINY STARBURST

Backed by a starburst base measuring slightly less than 2" wide, the Polaris cabinet knob makes the perfect accent for a bath or kitchen cabinet in your dream Ranch. It comes in three finishes, including polished nickel (shown): \$55.95. House of Antique Hardware, (888) 223-2545, houseofantiquehardware.com

2. GLAMOROUS

The Hollywood pendant goes glam with the addition of the Deco Wedding Cake tiered shade. Shown in lacquered polished brass, it comes in five other finishes. Overall length: 23" to 200". \$679. Rejuvenation, (888) 401-1900, rejuvenation.com

3. INDUSTRIAL CHIC

The Wilcox deep-bowl wall sconce, galvanized or in colorful porcelain enamel, is configured for integrated LED lamping. Pair over a double vanity or kitchen counter for a pop of color. In three sizes, \$445 to \$469. (Add \$99 for Jadeite, shown.) Barn Light Electric Co., (800) 407-8784, barnlight.com

4. GLITTER LAM

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5. A ROOMY WOMB

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Sharon Vaughan, Cloud Realty, sellwithcloud.com

MONROE, LA / \$24,900

A National Register-listed property, the Roland M. Fihol house is lavished with decorative fretwork inside and out. The whimsical, 1895 Folk Victorian is endangered by its proximity to a major highway.



TeJuan Jackson, Keller Williams Danville, kw.com

GEORGETOWN, IL / \$39,900

This pure example of a Gothic Revival cottage dates to 1846. It is in need of complete restoration; details include floor-to-ceiling arched windows, doors, mouldings, and the original newel post and balustrade inside.



Angela M. Lanuto, Coldwell Banker Village Green, angelalanuto.com

RENSSELAERVILLE, NY / \$579,000

Part of a complex of historic buildings on 70 acres, this ca. 1840 Greek Revival is being sold as a teardown. 😞 Elements on the façade include two-storey Ionic pilasters and a classic temple entrance with sidelights.



Maggie Gregg, Preservation North Carolina, presnc.org

WALLACE, NC / \$17,500

Built about 1795 and expanded in the mid-19th century, details on the Barnett-Carr house include sawn-work decoration and turned spindles on the porch. Inside: vertical and diagonal beadboard wainscots, mirrored overmantels, original trim.



Teena Genge, Hawaii Lifestyle Properties, unitedcountryhawaii.com

NA'ALEHU, HI / \$269,000

The remnants of a stone church (built in 1864) partially destroyed in an earthquake survive on a desirable ocean-view property. Details include stone corner quoins and embellished window openings.



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Wow! Congratulations, Old House, on 50 years of bringing eye candy and inspiration to Arts and Crafts fanatics like us! It feels like you've been around even longer... in a good way. We like old things.

Cheers to the next 50!

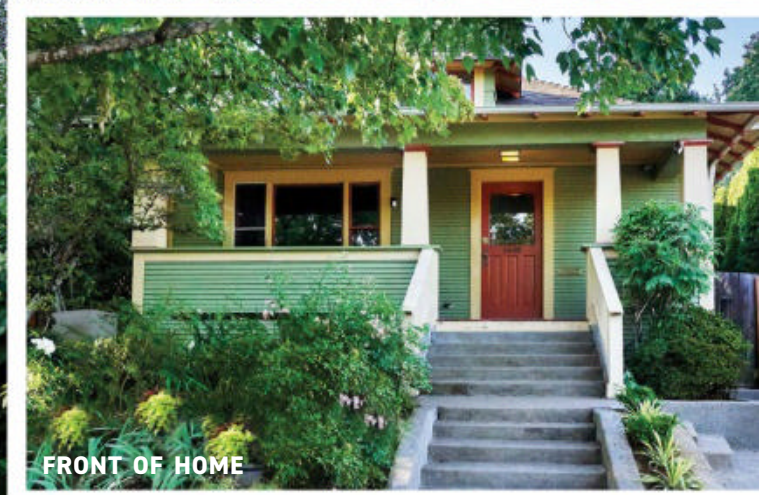
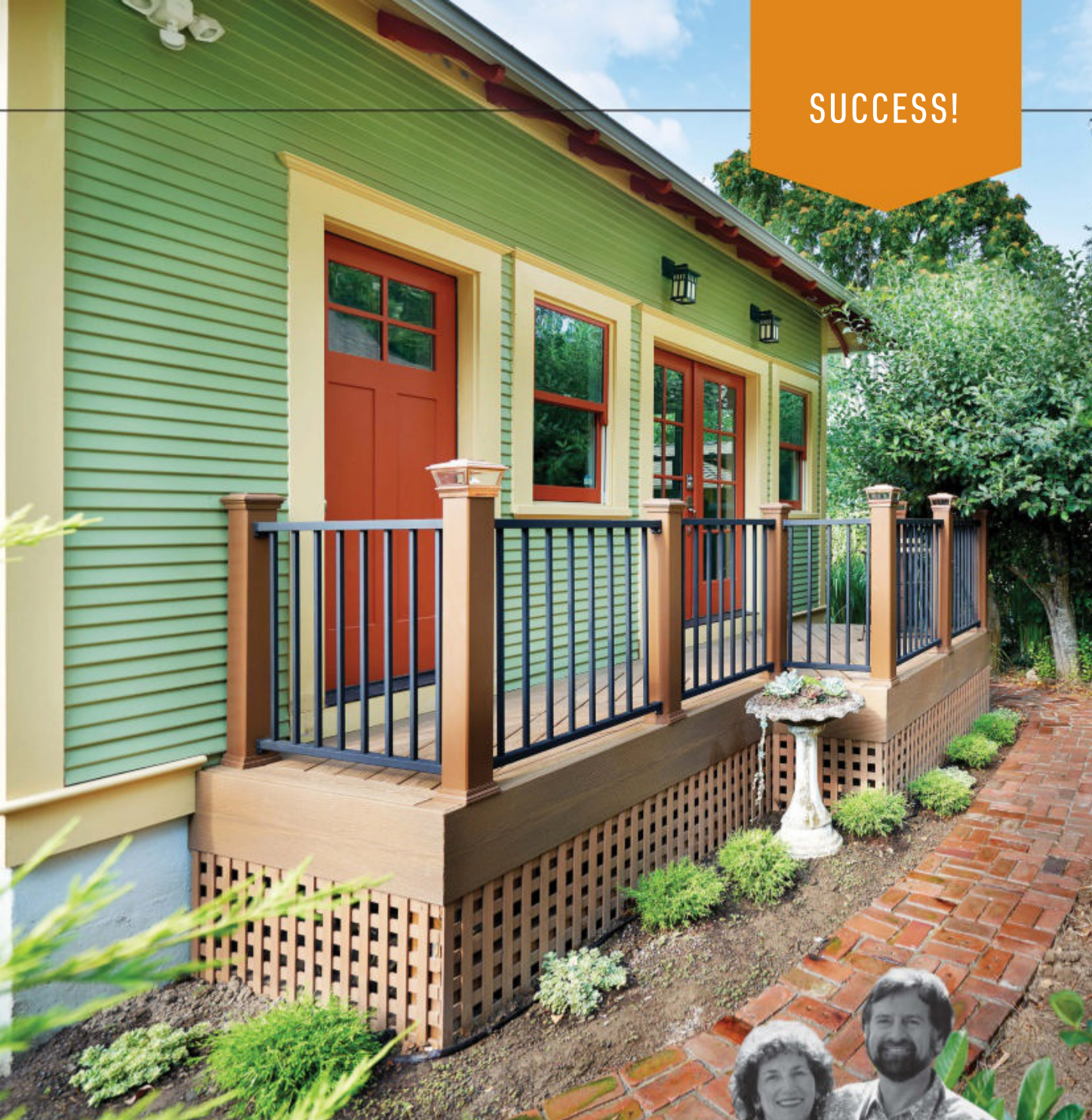


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DURING



DURING

A BIGGER BUNGALOW

We've owned this 1909 bungalow for years—and finally got around to the interior. **By Donna Pizzi & Philip Clayton-Thompson**

When in 2004 we bought this 1909 bungalow in Portland, Oregon, it was so dilapidated that the house inspector asked us if we knew what we were getting into. We could envision what it could become, though, because we work as a writer/stylist and photographer team for OHJ and other shelter magazines. We poured time, money, and sweat equity into it. I even designed a Craftsman-style front porch after we spent years removing aluminum siding and cedar shingles to uncover the wood lap siding.

We installed wood windows, took the sole bathroom down to its studs for a period renovation, and turned the attic into a spacious bed-sit loft. The narrow staircase to the loft is original.

The one thing we never addressed, however, was the kitchen. The room was intersected by five doors, making it impossible to add a modern-size refrigerator. It didn't matter because for years this house was our office space.

Fast forward to the summer of 2020. Philip, who'd worked in construction as a young man, decided to bump out the back of the house to create an eat-in kitchen and add a mudroom, a laundry (which the house lacked), a second bath, and a rear deck. We planned to decorate in a more mid-century style as this would become a rental. Our previous contractor, Mark Hereford of Hereford Construction, was unavailable, so we turned to interior-design colleagues and an architect to

TOP (rear, after) A balustraded deck leads from the new rear addition to a brick walkway and the backyard. **INSET** (front) The exterior of the house is a historic restoration in keeping with the early-20th-century neighborhood.

ABOVE Dealing with the cesspool, then framing the rear addition.

RIGHT Rounded-arch doorways, typical of the period, were retained or replicated. **BEFORE** Intersected by five doors, the old kitchen wasn't big enough for a standard refrigerator. New plank flooring is hard-wearing and surprisingly attractive luxury vinyl.



detail Mark's earlier concept.

Three (new to us) contractors bid on the job. The company we chose assured us that there was no need to decommission the cesspool that dated to 1909. Well, city inspectors then informed us otherwise. Video inspections of the drain helped us locate the old brick-lined cesspool—15' deep, 3' across, and 12' from back of house. It was intricately built by hand, apparently at great risk to workers back in the day.

City ordinance did in fact require decommissioning the cesspool, which hadn't been used since 1922 but was never filled. This was done by filling it with a cement slurry, a costly operation. Happily no sinkhole had ever opened. The sewer

hookup came some-time after 1922 and functions still.

To align the addition with the existing roof, the architect designed nine trusses, which passed city inspection. By mid-August, with framing complete, Philip was acting as construction manager, keeping the various crews moving forward and even cleaning up the worksite each day.

Using his plastering and painting expertise, Philip reiterated the existing



LEFT (from top) The main bathroom was renovated in 1920s style. • A powder room was added in the kitchen/mudroom/laundry addition at the rear of the house.

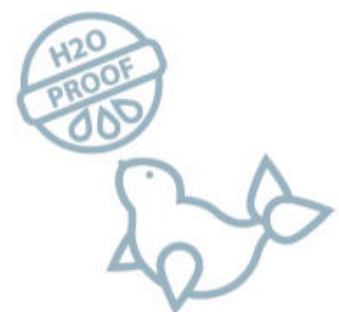
RIGHT Original architectural elements were retained even on the interior. The palette and furnishings in mid-century style appeal to the current rental market.



KID **PROOF.** PET **PROOF.** WATER **PROOF.**

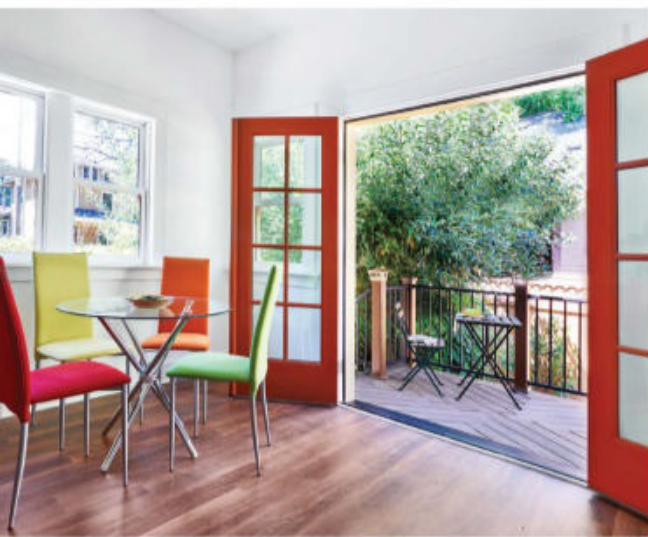
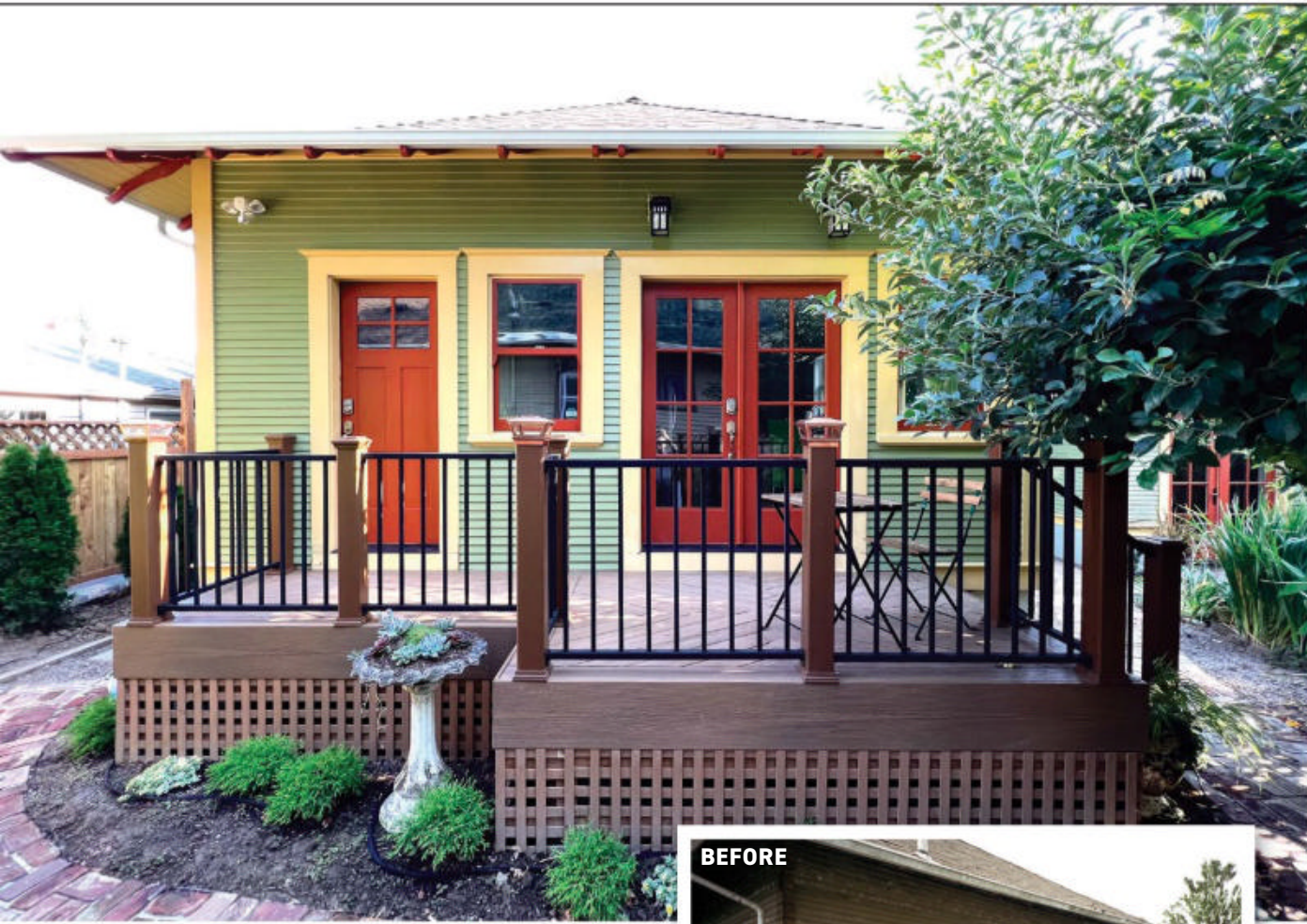


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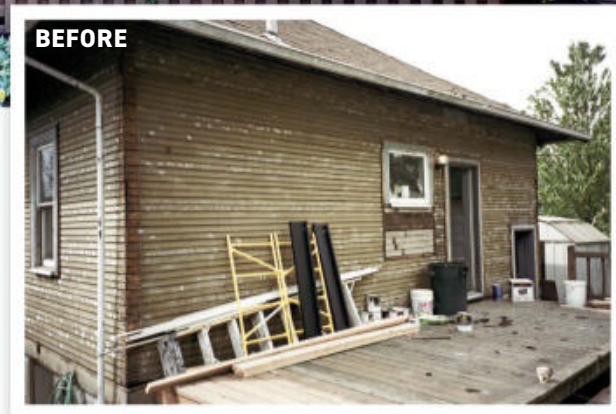


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ABOVE New French doors open from the breakfast area to the rear deck and backyard. **BELOW** A raised wood patio sits behind the new summer house—a “mini-me” of the original dwelling.



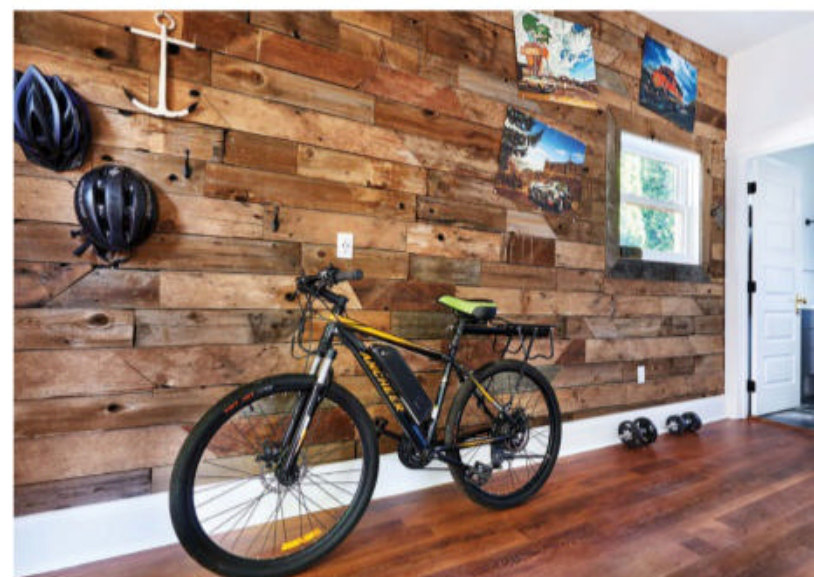
archway between the living and dining rooms by constructing a similar archway at the entrance of the new bump-out. He also recycled original kitchen floorboards to create a rustic design on the wall of the mudroom.

We used luxury vinyl plank Cali Saddlewood flooring throughout the addition, a budget-friendly choice that mimics the fir flooring. The design using an IKEA kitchen eschews upper cabinets, relying instead on shelves to open the space. French doors lead to a Fiberon deck with unique herringbone design by Fernando of Red Framing. Double-hung Jeld-Wen windows continue the look set by handcrafted rafter tails.

A separate garage had been demolished long before we bought the house. We created a new driveway, however, and built a summer house with a raised wood patio.

Turns out we got a nice compliment from one of our city inspectors, who declared that he would love to call this renovated old house home!

LEFT From the rear kitchen's breakfast area, French doors lead to a deck large enough for seating. **BEFORE** The rear elevation of the small house had been closed off from the outdoors. **BELOW** (from top) With the addition of skylights, the attic became a bed-sit suite. • Peel-and-stick wallpaper creates an accent wall in a bedroom furnished with mid-century-style pieces. • The mudroom wall is clad in recycled floorboards that were salvaged from the smaller, old kitchen.



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Outlets can be installed in floors, ceilings, or walls. They're out of the way and fit the style of the house. You won't notice the air vents but you will feel a new comfort. Unico offers a wide selection of outlet choices, allowing you to match any home décor or architectural style. The modular air supply tubing is easily installed in attics, ceilings, and crawl spaces. Unique design features mean there's no need to disrupt living space during installation.

free design services

If your project needs assistance, Unico offers a free service that includes full system design and an estimated materials list. All you need do is submit your plans at unicosystem.com. The company's design team will create an HVAC system design just for your home. It includes best placement of the unit, the number of outlets per room, and the best location for outlets.



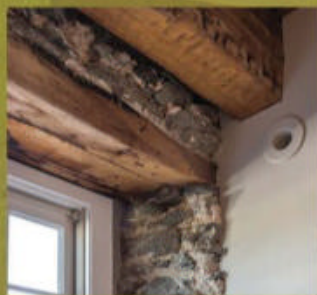
ABOVE: The Unico System installation in a custom home located on a Block Island home in Rhode Island. **BELOW:** The Unico System installed in a historic Frank Lloyd Wright-inspired house. **LEFT:** Outlets come in various finishes and can even be painted to blend seamlessly.



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DESIGN



OUR FAVORITE HOUSES

AND WHAT THEY TAUGHT US.

Timeless design from the pages
of *Old-House Journal* and
Old-House Interiors.

page 28

October 2001: Color sense in a fireplace mantel vignette at the Old Colonies-style home of the late John Burrows.

ERIC ROTH

28

DESIGN FAVORITES: PET PHOTOS FROM THE ARCHIVES

Looking back at our best-loved images over the years, we note that each timeless room has a lesson to impart.

+

34 THEY STILL MAKE

36 VINTAGE VISION

39 KITCHENS + BATHS





FAR LEFT Even a bit of antiquity lends an old-house air to rooms that afford modern function.

LEFT OHJ always has shown evocative rooms unrestored.

OPPOSITE Casual repose belies the careful planning that went into these rooms that show a subtle complementary color scheme, mixed furnishings, pattern scale, and a carry-through trim color all done to perfection.

design favorites

STYLE COLOR COMFORT

From the magazine archives, the editors select a handful of our pet photos (there are so many more!)—explaining why each resonates, teaches, and remains timeless.

Our archive is evergreen—by which I mean that rooms depicted in OHJ don't date themselves quite like those in most shelter magazines. Others chronicle trends (if you've picked up a 1950s magazine in a secondhand shop and giggled at the décor, you know what I mean). Most of the houses in OHJ feel timeless: because they are old to begin with and because their interiors are designed to complement the house. Less is torn out to be replaced by the new. Tradition and character play a bigger role. Also significant is that many of the houses we feature belong to OHJ readers, self-educated and creative, who act as their own decorators. Their houses are unique and far more personal than those professionally choreographed. **BY PATRICIA POORE**





holistic design

With a mix of antique and new, restored architecture and renovated spaces, most of what we feature are not purist “period rooms.” How to account for the sense of inevitable composure in them? Again, it’s because owners and designers respond to the age, style, and unique aspects of the house. **Design is a process of elimination. What’s left is appropriate.** • Even when contemporary finishes and furnishings are introduced in an old house, rhyme and reason dictate scale, shapes, and colors.

ABOVE A 1907 Arts & Crafts-era addition to a 1901 house, this spacious, comforting room is one we’ve considered practically perfect. **RIGHT** On paint: Brick is the given body color; a green accent, red’s complement, adds the right amount of energy.



MIXED HISTORY

Cast plaster is a permanent feature respected here; lighting and furniture are ephemeral and may change with the taste of the owner (who is also ephemeral!). Note the well-matched scale.



PERIOD CONTEXT

Some collectors prefer gallery-like displays (i.e., white walls behind decorative objects). Those in old houses often choose to keep architecture, furniture, and collectibles all in context. Note the consistency in objects.



The houses we've showcased date from three centuries plus; some have been period pieces, others interpretive, still others a study in bringing minimalism to an interior filled with antiquity. Some have been over-the-top mansions but others were restored on tight budgets. A common theme has been preservation of original elements, even if they are worn.

Another is the creation of a "scenario"—an imagined timeline or back-story that suggests a continuum between what was part of the original building and the often-necessary changes that came later. One could "date" an addition not to last year but to a much earlier change of ownership. The imagined scenario might inform today's design of, say, a new bathroom in an outhouse-era Colonial, or a Depression kitchen in a Victorian row house.

If there is a single thread that connects all, however, it's this: The owners bought an old house on purpose. They wanted the ghosts.

So, OHJ's coverage has been on one hand historical, on the other quirky; we have published both unretouched survivors and replica houses. This club is diverse and unafraid. Still, people ask if any "rules" of renovation and interior design might save us from obvious traps and expensive mistakes. Rules? Maybe not. As in most creative endeavors, the best work is by people who learned the rules and thus when to break them. Some guidelines, however, may help:

Knowledge is power. Understanding the period and style of a house mercifully narrows choices, allowing a head start. More impor-

RIGHT Perhaps the best example of "clean it first": original Douglas-fir cabinets rescued from decades of grease. **BELOW** An otherwise traditional white kitchen gets a color-blocked floor: owner whimsy has always been a thing. **BOTTOM RIGHT** A functional retro kitchen uses historical cabinet design and salvage.



LESSONS LEARNED: THE BATH

If any cohort still appreciates the easy-to-clean privacy of a three-fixture bathroom designed to accommodate a single occupant, it's old-house people. A good light fixture or bit of wallpaper can elevate the simplest cottage bath—or a pink-and-grey room ca. 1952. That said, we've published newly designed bathrooms that reflect Victorian built-ins, the "sanitary" white craze of the early 20th century, and jazzy Art Deco style. The best of the past is revived: think console sinks and tile, not carpeted steps leading to a sunken tub.

TOP Original Aesthetic Movement door hardware becomes functional art in an otherwise simple Victorian bathroom. **BELOW** Symmetry and mint green define order and cleanliness in this airy, Art Deco bath.





STYLE INSPIRATIONS

OHJ's sister publication *Old-House Interiors* ran a column called "Inspired By," which showed a renovated space accompanied by the historic house, room, or object that had inspired the new work. A staircase based on one in England, a kitchen island cued by a vintage worktable, a painted ceiling dreamt up after a trip to Morocco—we didn't run out of material. Inspiration comes not only from the house itself but perhaps from an unrestored gem in the neighborhood, from a visit to a museum house of similar age and style, from out-of-print books, from the carvings on an antique. ● Very often, new design reflects an understanding of period conventions or of the vernacular. Learning that shellacked beadboard was typical in seacoast cottages ca. 1880s–1910 might jump-start the direction of a restoration.

TOP Swooning over bird's-eye maple woodwork of 1888, the owner, a descendant of the man who built the house, bartered to get back the original faux-bamboo bedroom set from the relative who'd inherited it. **RIGHT** A salvaged apothecary (drugstore) counter cabinet set the tone during a redo of a mid-century cabin.



KNOTTY PINE?

Some materials lose favor, particularly when overused. Discerning owners, though, know when they have a good example of intrinsic value to the house. This kitchen, in a 1911 mountain cabin, survives from a late-1940s update done with panache. Knotty pine reminded the current owner of the beloved den in his childhood home.



ERIC ROTH (TOP LEFT); GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP RIGHT); GRIDLEY + GRAVES (BTM.)
OPPOSITE: GROSS & DALEY PHOTOGRAPHY (TOP); COURTESY NATIONAL TRUST/UK (ABOVE RIGHT); EDWARD ADDEO (BELOW)

tantly, that knowledge teaches us to differentiate between what is original and what was remodeled, and how the windows should look. **You get what you pay for.** This is almost always true. Do without, wait and save up, rather than subbing in short-lived materials or settling for poor craftsmanship.

Respect the architecture. Future owners will curse big changes that obscure the original design and period integrity in favor of individual taste and passing trends. You saw that when you were house-hunting. Paint plaster walls chartreuse or fuchsia ... but don't be the first one to paint 140-year-old

figured mahogany intrinsic to the 1880s opulence of the dining room. **Scale is everything**—regardless of style or personal taste. Better to use a contemporary adaptation in an appropriate scale (for the mantel, in a wallpaper pattern or the size of the breakfront) rather than a period element that isn't a fit.

Don't be afraid of color. Our ancestors clearly were not. All-white rooms are a recent affliction. **Be personal.** It isn't just a house, it's your home. Ignore the TV pundits du jour. That said, express your quirkier taste in a way that doesn't permanently damage the house.



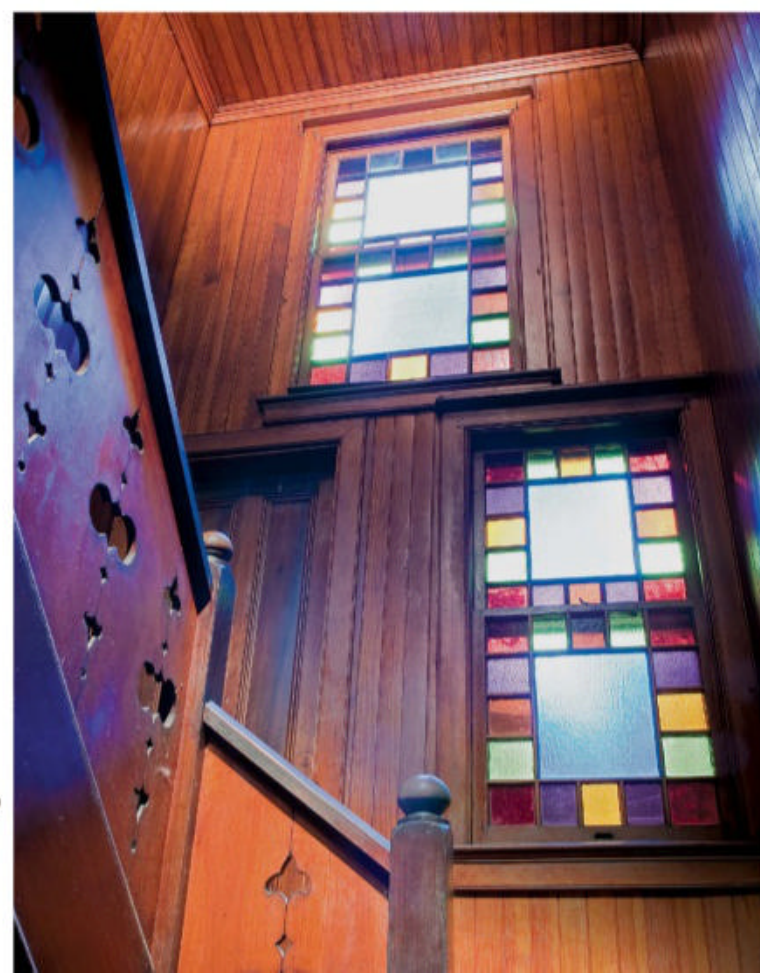
TREASURES

are what we find exploring the work of past designers, builders, and artisans. Dive into any period to find surprises, not to mention permission to deviate from what we thought were the rules. There's precedent for almost everything.

allusions past

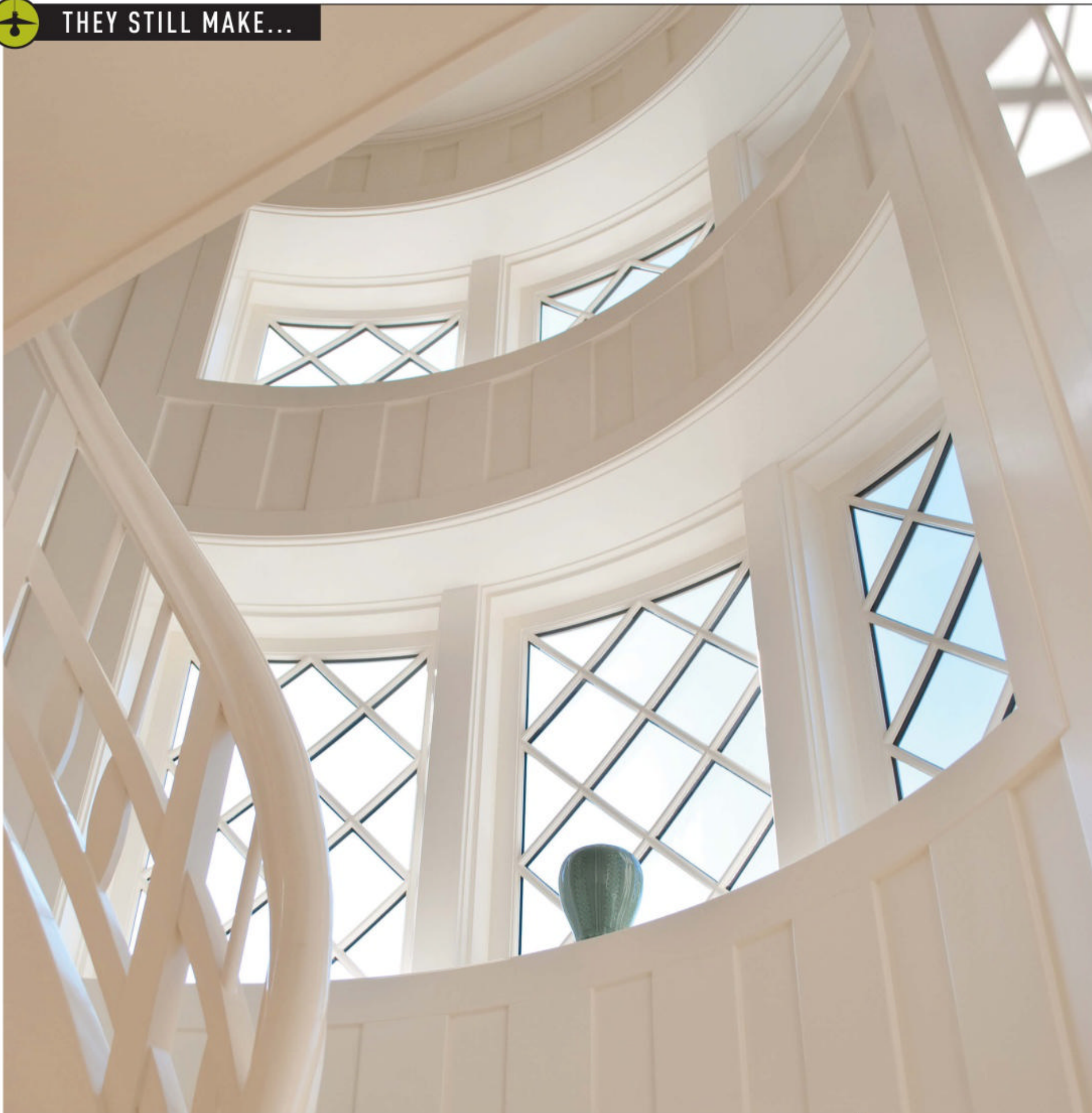
Leave it alone: a good rule at least until you've lived in the house for a while. The past may be present, offering clues to how the house once looked or functioned, yet be hard to appreciate at first because the context may have changed with later remodeling. The original may be dirty or worn. **"Wait and see"—time and again, we've heard that from owners** (usually too broke to rush in) whose tastes changed as they learned more. Many even have put back elements gone missing to restore design integrity. Photos from our archive are filled with past **conventions that have gone in and out of style but are essential to the character of the house**—stained glass, pocket doors, cast plaster. When renovation is needed, owners have looked back to be true to the house.

TOP In an Elizabethan Revival house, the apparently modern fireplace treatment was inspired by British Arts & Crafts designers Voysey and Baillie Scott; patterns by English designer William Morris complete the look. **RIGHT** (above) The atypical fireplace and various rooms at Standen (1892) have inspired many. (below) A perfect moment in time (ca. 1890) would be destroyed by white paint.





THEY STILL MAKE...



BOW WINDOWS WITH BENT GLASS

Bow windows gently curve in a convex semi-circle; historically, these were fitted with bent glass. Among the most famous are those in the ca. 1820s bow-front town houses in Boston's Beacon Hill neighborhood, where windows are notable for their lavender glass. Bent (slumped, curved) glass is made by heating in a kiln until it is softened enough to slump or sag into or over a mold. In the tower shown, simulated wood muntins are twisted helically to follow the curve of the glass. The diamond lattice pattern was popular on Shingle Style and Queen Anne houses 1885–1920. Such windows are custom-built to order by HeartWood Windows & Doors: heartwoodwindowsanddoors.com



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Smithsburg, MD - Bell-Varner House, circa 1851, overlooking Little Grove Creek in the beautiful Cumberland Valley. Center hall with 4 bedrooms and 2.5 baths. Features early woodwork, original mantels, pine floors, wraparound porch. 5.93 acres on 2 parcels with views of surrounding farmland. Large bank barn, double garage, and multiple outbuildings. \$795,000. Roger Fairbourn Real Estate, 301-733-4183, RogerFairbournRealEstate.com



Washington, GA - Pleasant Shade, a grand renovated southern mansion boasts 5,590 sq ft with 6 spacious bedrooms and 5 and one-half baths. Wide center hall, double parlors with exquisite moldings, banquet dining, amazing kitchen, side sunroom, 2 primary floor suites, and library. New electrical, plumbing, roof, baths, kitchen....no expense spared. \$950,000. Deborah Rainey, Georgia Realty Sales, 706-318-5263, GeorgiaLandForSale.com



Lake City, IA - Circa 1901 Gen. Cass and Belle Smith house on oversized lot. Private patio area and porches. Completely renovated by renowned organ builder in late 1990s and meticulously maintained. Original staircase and spectacular woodwork. Wine cellar. Spacious living room and game room. Beautiful inside and out with great spaces to entertain. \$265,000. Emily Melody, Realtor, Exit Realty Frontier, 712-210-6449, ListItWithEmily.com



Massillon, OH - Landmark Kettering home built in 1884. Canton Preservation Award. Triple brick exterior. Black Walnut and Chestnut woodwork, high ceilings. 12-course basement. New roof, gutters and soffits, new wood floors in kitchen and dining room, 2-car garage with cupola, and driveway. Original cookhouse. Free gas. Ideal location. \$399,900. Charlyn Bridges, Howard Hanna, 330-388-0142, CharlynBridges.com



Savannah, GA - Circa 1868 luxury brick 2-bedroom 1.5 bath home offers unrivaled combination of historic charm and modern sophistication in the Historic District. Spacious rooms, high ceilings, exquisite molding, and original hardwood floors. Gourmet chef's kitchen. Private courtyard. Short term vacation rental certificate. \$1,050,000. Ron Melander and Jordan Gray, Keller Williams, 912-441-7124 or 912-233-1575, SavannahHistoricProperties.com



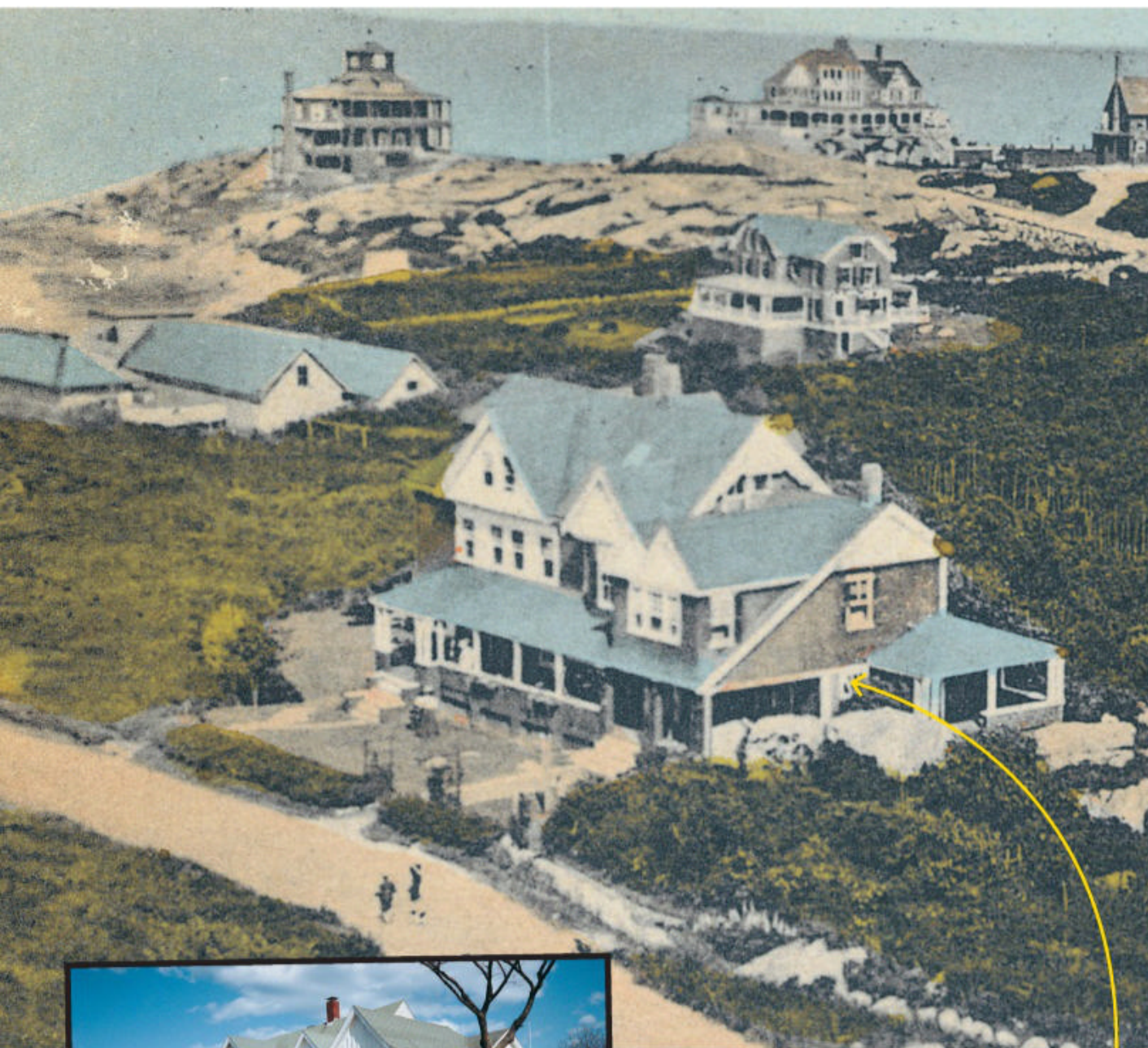
Washington, NC - Circa 1785 Hyatt House, fully restored and on National Register. Historic port town; views of the Pamlico River. Original millwork and hardwood floors mix perfectly with new kitchen and bathrooms. 4 bedrooms, 4.5 baths. All new electrical, plumbing, zoned HVAC, and more. Steps from public docks and downtown shopping and dining. \$774,000, Rosie Lilley Smith, The Rich Co., 252-944-8769

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Tanglemoor, built in 1904

Editor Patricia Poore restored her house 1992–98 (ongoing!).



A small Victorian cabin was substantially redone in 1904 in shingled Elizabethan mode to become the summer cottage of a Boston barrister. The interior was rustic.



ABOVE "A 1910 photograph, taken from the tower of an old hotel (since burned down), guided my un-muddling." **BEFORE** Many changes had been made to porches, windows, even one dormer.

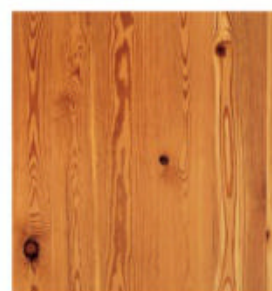
AFTER "I put everything back, but to code, and went with a softer paint palette, no bright white. It's nicer inside, too."

The products shown were used in restoring this house—all found, of course, through O+J.

"Now hanging on my outside porch wall is Brass Light Gallery's European Country Wide Curved-arm Exterior Wall Light. It comes in seven metal finishes (this is Verdigris Patina) with several art-glass options." brasslightgallery.com



"My moody dining room (not shown) rejected every rug borrowed from a dealer: even those labeled Arts & Crafts had been re-colored for today's decorators and seemed to float. Not so 'Wyndham' from The Persian Carpet, reminiscent of Voysey or Gavin Morton." persiancarpet.com



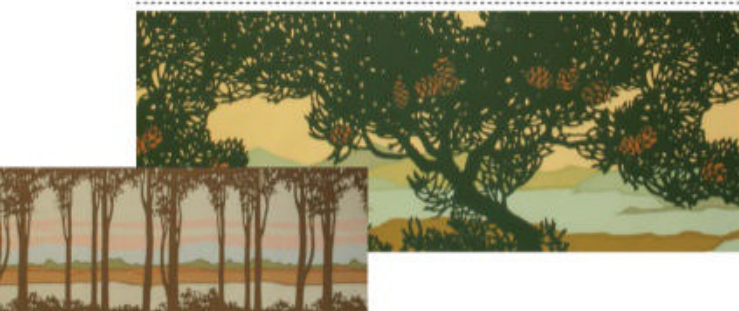
"The fir floor in my kitchen has taken a beating and looks it—but upstairs, floors of reclaimed Southern heart pine, from The Joinery, are as beautiful as when they were laid in 1995." Find quarter-sawn, plain-sawn, and clear vertical grain in newly harvested or reclaimed wood in many species, hardwood and soft. thejoineryco.com



"Ever since Brooklyn, I wanted those matte geometric and encaustic tiles found in brownstone vestibules. In converting a porch to a sunroom, I ordered these—straight from the manufacturer in England." These days, buy through tilesource.com



The transitional kitchen (built by Kennebec Co.) demanded a centerpiece range: the ca. 1915 Detroit Jewel was found and refurbished by Dave Erickson in Mass.: ericksonsantiquestoves.com



"OHJ and Bradbury & Bradbury grew up together! Tanglemoor suitably has been fitted with both their English and American Arts & Crafts papers: insects from the Fenway suite as well as Walden; Fir Tree and Birchwood friezes (above) in the 1910 boys' bedrooms." bradbury.com



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In the pantry, wood counter-tops surround a copper sink. The “flipper doors” add a period touch. A dishwasher hides behind false drawer fronts. Radius shelves, without brackets, are rabbeted and glued to wood cleats anchored into the wall.



Period-inspired Kitchen & Pantry

In Portland, Oregon, an unusable kitchen and remodeled pantry are sympathetically reimagined with elements of the 1910s. **Photos by Blackstone Edge Studios**

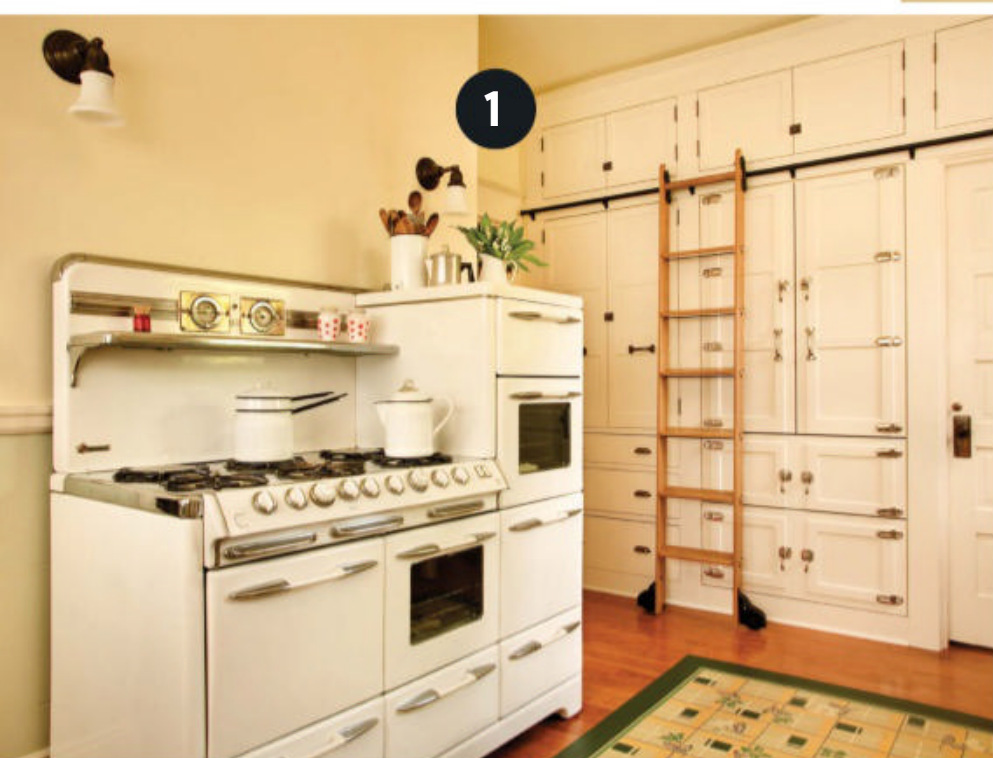
The three-storey American Foursquare was built in 1909. Although the back kitchen was a rare time capsule dating to the 1920s, it hadn't functioned well for decades. One big room with neither cabinets nor built-ins for storage, it housed a 6 ½-foot-long sink that blocked the basement door. Since the 1970s, the separate butler's pantry, much remodeled, had served as the main kitchen.

"We agonized over what to do for years," says homeowner Jack. He and his wife, Sig, got help from restoration consultant Karla Pearlstein and designer Matthew Roman. The consensus was to create a usable space that had the feeling of a 1910s kitchen. The main "stove room" would remain and so would the pantry. After removal of oak-veneer cabinets,

a dropped ceiling, and fluorescent lighting, the butler's pantry looks much as it would have originally. (See page 31 and opposite, bottom.)

For the main kitchen in the back (below and right), Roman designed a full wall of cabinets to hide a refrigerator and a pullout pantry. A restored antique stove, an old enamelware table, a porcelain sink on legs, and a new floorcloth patterned on vintage linoleum complete the period room.

Contractor Mike Edeen stripped the tall baseboards and repaired the old plaster. He refinished the fir floors found beneath layers of vinyl. Then he built the period-inspired cabinets.



1. BUNGALOW-ERA WALL

One wall originally held a dumbwaiter and closet but now has been built out with period-style cabinets floor to ceiling. The owner built the library ladder from a kit; it allows access to upper cabinets surrounding the built-in refrigerator. A vertical pull-out is included.

2. VINTAGE EVERYWHERE

True vintage appliances are key to authenticity. A 1940s O'Keefe & Merritt 'Aristocrat' stove with two ovens anchors the rear kitchen or stove room. The vintage sink showed up on craigslist.



3. PANTRY DESIGN

The restored pantry creates an L-shape with the stove room in the rear. Building out the wood countertop and top row of drawers allowed foot room for anyone standing at the counter, making a modern toe-kick unnecessary. See the opposite wall on p. 39.



BE INSPIRED...



The solid-brass Newbury 4" surface-mount kitchen light from Schoolhouse comes in four finishes including true black. It's shown with the 10"-dia. Belt Shade in Opal; pinstriped shades and multiple shapes avail. \$278 schoolhouse.com



Familiar from the 1940s and '50s, these counter-height step stools come in chrome with a padded vinyl seat and back. (The steps stow under the seat.) The chairs are 16" wide x 35 1/2" high. In black or red, they are \$119.99. From Through the Country Door, (800) 341-9477, countrydoor.com

The gooseneck bridge-style kitchen faucet with metal cross handles, made by Randolph Morris, is sold by Vintage Tub & Bath. This is the oil-rubbed bronze finish. Cross handles also in porcelain; metal lever handles are another option. Starting at \$420. vintagetub.com



Pacific Registers makes cast-aluminum HVAC grilles in historical patterns, sized 8 x 8 to 32 x 22 inches. Louvers and dampers sold separately may be added to control airflow. A 14 x 10 register in the Victorian pattern is \$87. Also laser-cut wood vent covers, stone covers & more. pacificregister.com



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KNOW-HOW: STORING ENERGY AT HOME

Fast-changing technology has yielded improvements in high-tech batteries for power backup.



52 SHOP TOUR

54 TOOLS + MATERIALS

61 OLD HOUSE DIYer

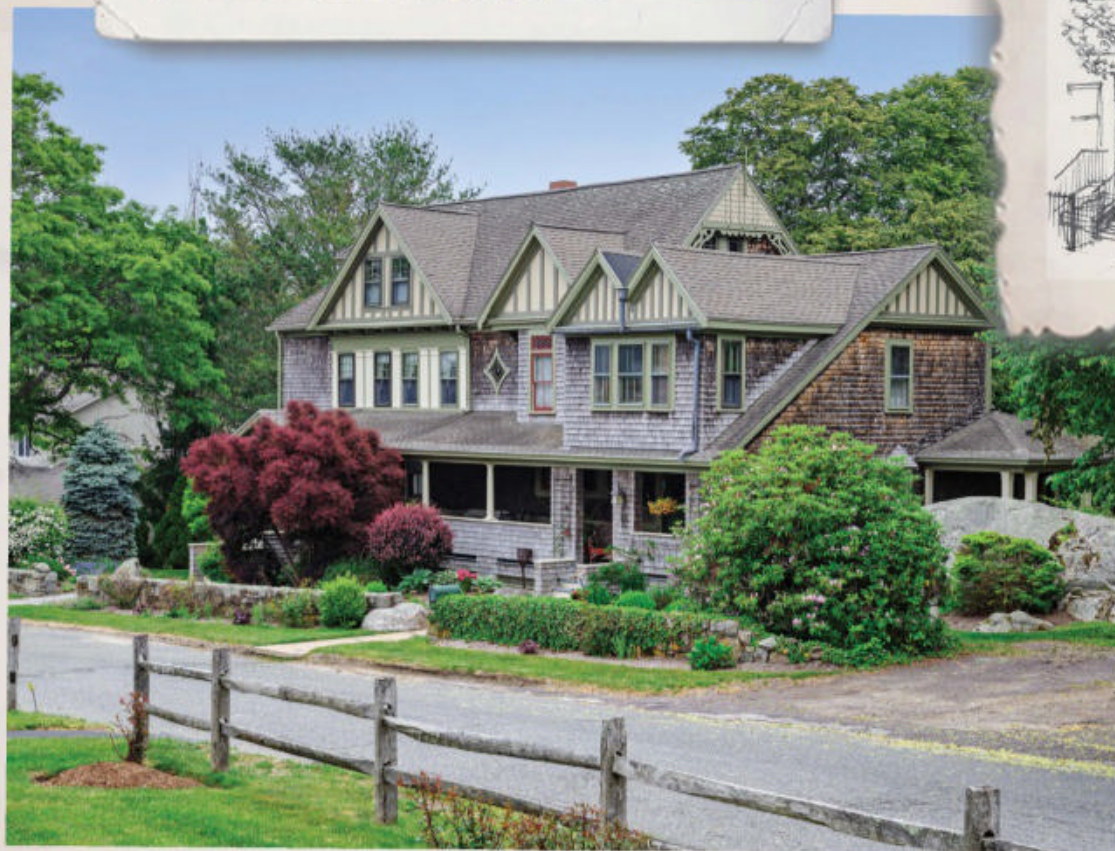
67 SCREWED UP

69 SALVAGE IT

73 DO THIS, NOT THAT



CLOCKWISE (from top left) Lori's 1929 Foursquare; a sketch of Patty's 1911 limestone row house in Brooklyn; Becky's capacious Craftsman Foursquare; Mary Ellen's 1969 Modern house in Maine; and Patty's Elizabethan Revival shingle pile, restored to its 1904 appearance.



OPPOSITE (from top) Inga's Greek Revival farmhouse, which she designed as a vernacular example ca. 1850 with telescoping "later" additions and a barn. Mary Ellen's 1913 rusticator camp, different on every elevation; and her previous 1865 Second Empire brick row house in Boston.



Pictures don't always tell the full story behind what it means to own, restore—and perpetually maintain—an old house. Like most of our readers, OHJ staff members have restored key features and remodeled kitchens and bathrooms as money and time permit. To me, overcoming problems on the way to creating beautiful or at least useful spaces is perhaps the most exhilarating part of restoration. I say that as I embark on my summer project: stripping multiple layers of caked-on paint from the floor of a large, screened-in porch.

For others of us, it was adapting the design of a mid-1800s beadboard sink cabinet into a seacoast kitchen remodel ... or choosing a much-loved wallpaper for a tiny powder room. I'd almost rather have a problem that requires professional assistance to address; an example is the sudden incursion of water in the buried oil tank that I knew could be an issue one day. While there are so many stories we could tell, we've chosen the best (worst?) from only our current houses. —**MARY ELLEN POLSON**

we tell tales

A REALITY CHECK FROM OHJ STAFFERS

FROM PLUMBING FAILURES TO ENVIRONMENTAL NEAR DISASTERS, WE DISH ON OUR WORST AND BEST MOMENTS, REVELING IN THE LOVE OF OLD HOUSES WHILE REVEALING RENOVATION TIPS GLEANED FROM THE SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS.

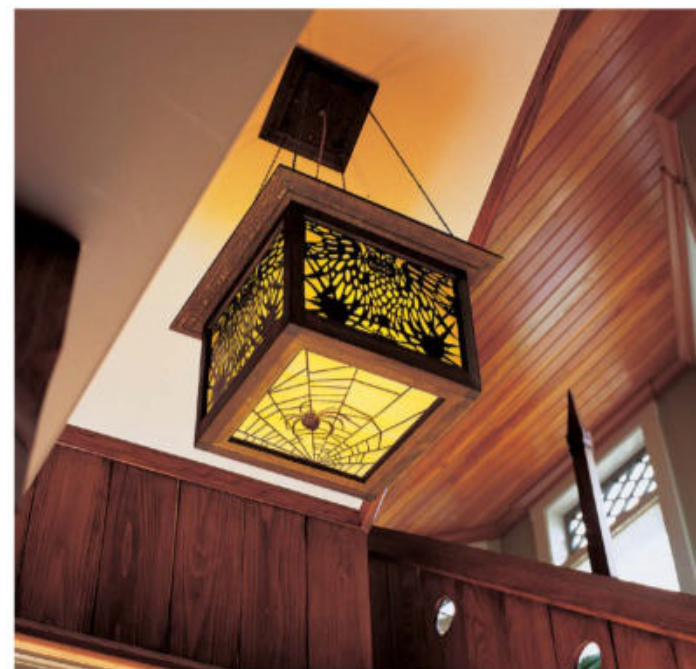


LEFT Tanglemoor, designed as a summer house with Elizabethan Revival and Shingle Style elements, was fully restored about 25 years ago. **ABOVE** Patty, aka editor Patricia Poore, contemplates a bathroom renovation in 1997. **BELOW** A spiderweb motif in nearby rooms led to a fantasy pendant with hand-cut filigree overlays, by David Berman of Trustworth Studios.

“Why do you buy these pathetic old houses?!”

—PATTY’S MOM, 1992

My 1904 seaside cottage was marketed as a teardown. Among many desecrations, the front porch had been torn off and the main staircase removed. I knew what it must have looked like, however, and proceeded to put too much time and money into saving it. Knowing the house leaned toward English Arts & Crafts, I coveted for it the fairytale staircase in William Morris’s Red House in Bexleyheath, South London. That house was then in private hands and the Phaidon book about it not yet published. I gave a blurry photo and a vintage illustration to my bewhiskered stairbuilder, who said nothing. A few days later, he returned with full-size shop drawings. The stair is about $\frac{2}{3}$ scale as my house has lower ceilings than Red House. When they were little, my boys called it “the Castle Stair.” • The rounded kitchen island came about after a visit to Castle Tucker, a Historic New England property. The model was built by boatbuilders, perfect for Gloucester. My version conceals a soapstone sink, dishwasher, and bins. —PATRICIA POORE



FAR LEFT The compact kitchen island was inspired by a sink cabinet built in 1860 by shipbuilder William Colby for historic Castle Tucker in Maine.

LEFT The Reformed Gothic staircase—actually two stairs side by side—is modeled on one Philip Webb designed for William Morris’s Red House in 1859. **RIGHT** Damaged wood behind an outdoor shower had the texture of rotten zucchini.

beware what lies **BENEATH**

I've made my share of mistakes. We installed a hand-held shower and drain for rinsing beach sand off kids and dogs. We shut the water off in the fall. All seemed well until my son gave Loki a pre-season bath. With frost still possible, he went to shut the water off and discovered water cascading into the crawl space. Ripping off shingles (and then more shingles) exposed the extent of damage. The corner sill and post, sheathing, and even some of the fir porch decking had rotted. Several things had gone wrong. **Water lines were in an exposed corner of an unheated crawl space. The turn-off valve was in a cold zone and there was no good way to flush remaining water from the pipes.** The inevitable leak was undetectable from outside. In part due to inadequate flashing, water ran undetected into the corner of the house every summer. After carpentry repairs, **I replaced the shower apparatus with frost-resistant exterior-grade brass fittings and better flashing.** The plumbing is now configured so I can slide it out from the exterior and store it each winter. Now we do a two-person inspection each season. —P. POORE

GREG PREMUR (BERNIES & OPP. EXT.); BRUCE MARTIN (OPP. INTERIORS & PORTRAIT)

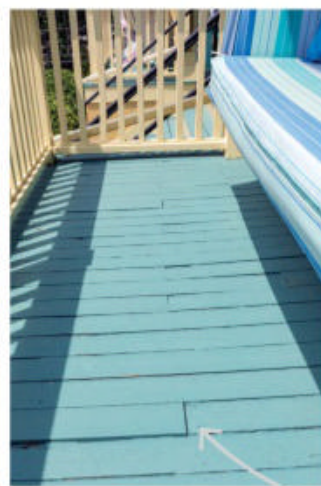


RIGHT The Bernies' house got a high-end makeover 70 years ago. **BELOW** Tom and Becky relax on the harbor-view end of the porch, which extends past the original columns for an outdoor sitting room.



Not All Remodeling is Bad!

One of the best features of our American Foursquare near the harbor is the wide and deep front porch. It hasn't always been this way. In the 1950s, the entire house (some part dates to 1879) was improved with Colonial Revival mantels, etc.; one upgrade was expanding the ends of the porch nearly 4' past



the columns. The house had had a different set of steps and a narrow porch only about 6' deep. We're happy to have inherited a remodeled porch that affords two outdoor rooms: one for plentiful seating and a view, the other for a nap-size porch swing. The extended porch boards see more weather than the original deck, but not enough to explain why the old fir remains intact as the newer boards (which we keep painted) rot and splinter every few years. That dense old fir is hard as a rock. —BECKY BERNIE





starting from scratch

My husband, Jeff King, and I looked for an old house starting out but couldn't find one with the integrity we wanted. **We decided to build our own "old house," mostly with our own lumber (from the site) and labor. To match the vernacular, I chose a simple Greek Revival style with curved cornice mouldings and returns, copied from houses on Cape Ann.** A talented woodworker and machinist who can build anything out of wood or metal, Jeff hand-planed these. The front—intended to look like the “oldest” section—is traditional 2x6 construction, while the back half is post and beam. The 4x8 and 8x12 cross beams, most of the flooring, and 2'-wide horizontal interior paneling in the living room all were milled from mature pines on the property nearing the end of their natural lives. Inspired by my work with *Old-House Journal* and *Arts & Crafts Homes*—and by black-and-white pictures of old New England houses I found in the OHJ library—I planned an interior with a sampling of compatible styles—Candace Wheeler's 'Carp' wallpaper, William Morris papers and textiles. We also used salvage: Doors and trim mouldings in the hall came from a house being razed down the coast. We added Swedish-inspired cabinets to reflect my Scandinavian heritage. One project to come is tiling the arched fireplace in the front section. I modeled it after First Period (Colonial) fireplaces and those at Standen, the British National Trust property. —INGA SODERBERG-KING



ABOVE Inga and Jeff built their home in a vernacular Greek Revival style, doing much of the construction work themselves.

determined to add A POWDER ROOM

Our 1929 American Foursquare has the typical shortcomings of the era: no bathroom on the first floor and only a single coat closet. When my husband and I realized we'd willingly sacrifice the closet, we converted that tiny space (a scant 3' x 4') beside the kitchen into a cute and carefully designed powder room.

Many period-style toilets were just too deep for our space, as we needed 21" between toilet and sink to meet code. I made mock-up toilets to scale, out of cardboard boxes. Measuring only 16" wide x 24 5/8" deep, the Icera model we chose fit perfectly opposite the tiny corner sink and corner medicine cabinet I'd found after intense internet searching.

Then came the fun part: using hand-made art tiles from Carreaux du Nord as a backsplash. In a rich yellow gloss glaze, two rabbits and two squirrels represent our backyard wildlife! I had long adored Trustworth Studios' 'Squirrel & Vine' wallpaper, a C.F.A. Voysey design from 1930. Now I finally had a place to put it!

We wanted a period wall sconce but not the shadows one would create in the small space. We opted for a low-profile overhead light-and-fan combo. The automatic fan gives the occupant a sense of noise-blocking privacy. I painted the plastic cover the same pale aqua as the ceiling so you don't even see it. As a last touch, we finished the floor in 1 1/2" hex real marble floor tiles in a pale green colorway, tying together the colors in our Birdie Bath. —LORI VIATOR

Our people with OLD HOUSES

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 - >**HEATHER** • Farmhouse 1751 • Haymarket, VA • 19 years
 - >**INGA** • Greek Revival designed 1996 • Gloucester • 27 years
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 - >**LORI** • Foursquare 1929 • Gloucester • 4 years
 - >**MARY ELLEN** • Catskills Camp 1913 • Bearsville, NY • 4 years
 - >**PATTY** • Tudorbethan 1904 • Gloucester • 31 years
 - >**PETE** • Sears Foursquare 1924 • Wash., DC • 40 years
 - >**REGINA** • Folk Victorian 1910 • Gloucester • 40+ years
- ... and more. We tend to stay put after restoration!



ABOVE West Coast editor Brian Coleman has spent decades on his highly ornamental Victorian.





FAR LEFT Barely 3' x 4', the tiny bath is a jewel box accented with warm yellow art tile and Voysey-designed 'Squirrel and Vine' wallpaper.

BELOW As inches were precious (and they had to meet plumbing codes), Lori mocked up a life-size toilet out of cardboard to make sure it would fit.

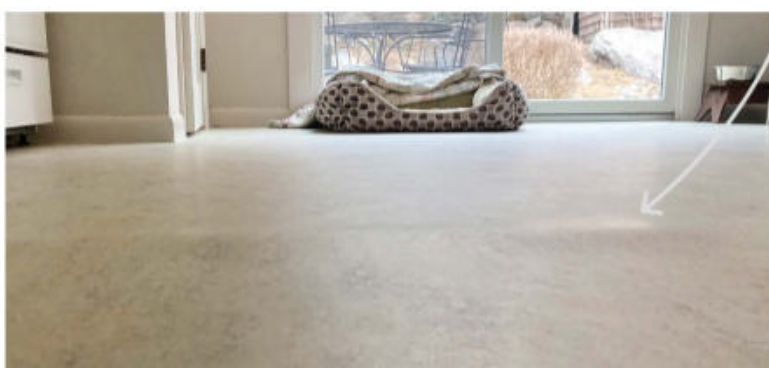
LEFT The tiny corner sink projects minimally into the room.



BELOW Because the cabinets are richly colored, walls were painted a beach-sand color to blend in with the still-serviceable Formica countertops. **BOTTOM LEFT** Failure to remove the old vinyl floor led to bumps rising under the new Marmoleum. The installer finally removed all previous layers and laid new sheet Marmoleum. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT** Lori and Steve on the porch.

→ oh but bumps along the way

The powder-room project was part of a modest overhaul of the kitchen. With glee, we'd peeled 1980s pink vinyl off walls. Though tired, the 1950s wood cabinets were solid, so my husband, Steve Smith, sanded and painted them a vivid green that suggests my collection of majolica. We switched out grubby hardware for heavy Amerock pulls in a satin-nickel finish. We replaced dingy, dented vinyl flooring with Forbo's sheet Marmoleum in the Seashell design, reminiscent of 1930s jaspé patterns. All good until bumps appeared in the flooring. The installer identified the problem: sections of the old vinyl floor (which they elected not to remove) were glued to the substrate but others were not. The new linoleum literally sucked sections up, creating bumps. The installer, a local company of good reputation, removed all layers and relaid new Marmoleum. —L. VIATOR



▶ **disaster** AVERTED

After living in a series of historic houses and prewar apartments during our nomadic careers, Jim and I bought the 1913 Catskills “rusticator” that’s now our home. It came with several potential big-money pitfalls, but it was of the Arts & Crafts period, and we’d never owned one of those. Be careful what you wish for.

We thought we had dodged a bullet when we learned the buried 1,000-gallon oil tank was protected by a cathodic system that supposedly prevents corrosion (thus the steel tank won’t leak). An oil leak would pollute the soil and groundwater, causing environmental risk to nearby lakes and streams—and in our case, our well. Remediation from a leak that pollutes a nearby water source can cost \$100,000 or more. To be on the safe side, we bought insurance to protect us should we ever need remediation. All good until a technician doing a routine furnace inspection announced that so much water had mixed in with the oil in the tank, it could destroy the furnace. Oops.

One winter morning, a crew duly arrived. These days, old oil tanks aren’t pulled out of the ground and discarded; they’re abandoned in place after emptying. While workers installed the smaller (and much too prominent) above-ground tank in our side garden, others removed dirt and gravel and finally the (pre-paid!) oil, at last swabbing with oil-absorbent (oleophilic) pads.

As the building inspector looked on, a worker began cutting an inspection hole in the bottom of the tank. A gusher of water hit him in the face. “There’s no way that tank was leaking if there was that much pressure inside,” the inspector declared. Given the OK, the backhoe operator filled the tank with gravel, buried the hole, and leveled the site. Our mini-disaster cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000. As there was no need for remediation, the insurance didn’t kick in. —THE POLSONS

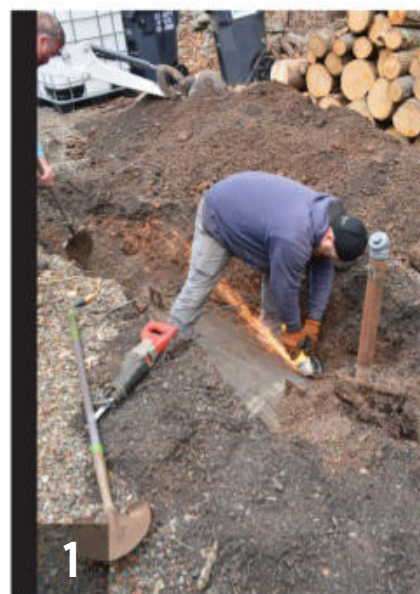


ABOVE From the exterior, quite different on each elevation, you’d never know a two-storey great room, moody in dark wood, awaits inside the mountain cabin. **LEFT** Mary Ellen and Jim Polson have settled in after a long series of old houses.

one After the backhoe operator pushed aside dirt to a depth of about two feet, a worker cut a man-sized hole in the top of the tank, using a rotary saw.

two Inside, the tank was full to the brim with about \$900 worth of fuel oil, all of which had to be discarded.

three Workers wearing oil-resistant respirators emptied the tank using suction and buckets, finally wiping the bottom clean with disposal pads.



out of the **GLOAMING** *Our house looks vaguely Dutch Colonial but its double-height interior comes as a surprise. Finished in dark-stained pine, the vast living room has a 19'-high ceiling. A dogleg staircase leads to an open gallery above. ● I will never paint that room. During the day, an enormous north-facing window and a bay window on the west side let in the light. On sunny days, beautiful dapples cascade through the old glass to land on mellowed boards. At night, however, art on the walls disappears into the gloom. ● Inspired by a 1929 fixture in a nearby tourist hotel, I found a pair of Tudor Revival pendant lanterns at an antiques store. Now fitted with pale-yellow Kokomo opalescent art glass, they hang in the gallery. I wish I’d chosen mica, but ordering glass precut to size was much simpler. ● Hanging the lanterns was a challenge. In a normal house, an electrician cuts a hole in the drywall for an electrical box. Not here. Running power meant installing metal raceway conduit to new boxes mounted on ceiling boards. I wisely painted lengths of conduit and boxes before installation. —MEP*

LEFT Decorated with trefoils and other Tudor Revival motifs, the hanging pendants softly illuminate the upstairs gallery.

JIM POLSON

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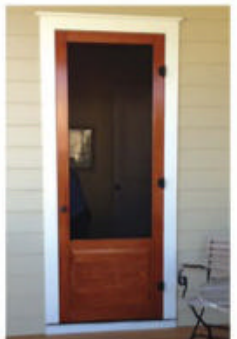


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Architectural Accents

This super-organized salvage store is a worldwide resource for owners, architects, and set designers. **By Brian D. Coleman**



Charles Nevinson buys in bulk: 300 pairs of doors from France, 8,000 tiles from Belfast. He can outfit an entire home. Born and raised in the U.K., Nevinson comes from a family of architects and artists. A favorite childhood pastime was counting chimney pots on walks about London. He had a successful early career in capital development, restoring historic London buildings for adaptive reuse (to pubs, restaurants, wine bars, townhomes) and in the process making invaluable salvage contacts across Europe. He helped restore Boston's Faneuil Hall; after completing a project in Atlanta, he decided to stay here and open his architectural salvage business, in 1981.

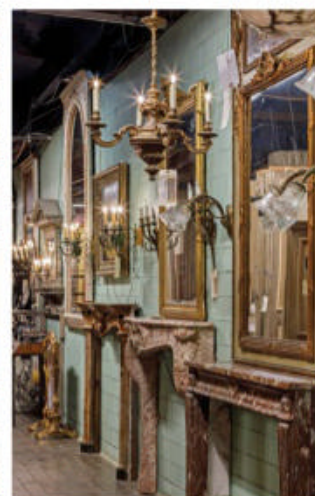
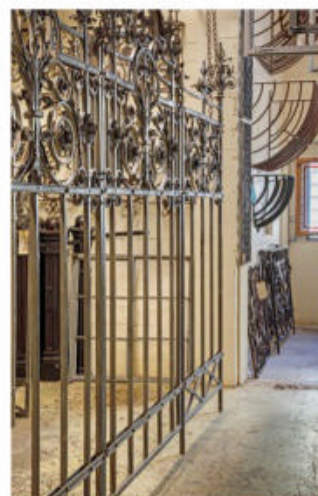
Nevinson started out in a small house (Dick Van Dyke had lived there) but outgrew it and moved to the abandoned, 30,000-square-foot Foremost Dairy building. He filled the store with mantels and mirrors, doors, columns, and lighting fixtures as well as hardware both vintage and reproduction.

The former rehabber wants to make things easy for his buyers. In areas of the shop, staffers strip, refinish, and even carve woodwork; repair and re-lead windows; rewire fixtures for UL approval; and plate and polish hardware.

Popular garden materials include limestone pots and urns, benches, chimney pots, statuary, and mushroom-shaped staddle stones originally used to keep wooden granaries off the ground. Nevinson offers cast-stone reproductions indistinguishable from the originals—handy when multiples are needed.



LEFT Owner Charles Nevinson visits the lighting section. **ABOVE** Every type of decorative hardware, old and new, is stocked. **BELOW** (from left) This 19th-century, cast-iron and copper kettle was once used for making cheese. • The shop works with talented blacksmiths to provide both restored and custom-made wrought-iron railings. • Fine stone, marble, and wood mantels line walls.



JOHN NEITZEL

BELOW Architectural Accents is in Atlanta's Buckhead district, housed in what was the Foremost Dairy building.

Drafting and residential design services are offered: A recent project was an Elizabethan country house outfitted with salvage from top to bottom: oak timbers and roof beams, limestone walls and salvaged doors, hardware and lighting, and even vintage iron gates and fencing. • Architectural Accents, 2711 Piedmont Rd. NE, Atlanta, GA: architecturalaccents.com



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Things I Wish...

I'd bought long ago, when my renovations began. **By Mary Ellen Polson**

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The Big Woolly Dust Mop with a telescoping handle makes short work of cobwebs and dust in high-ceilinged coves and corners—even if you're only 5' tall! The all-wool mop has a large swiveling head that shakes clean and does not require a cleaning agent. \$49.98. Sladust, (802) 779-2541, sladust.com

2. A LIGHTWEIGHT DRILL

Anyone can wield the PS31-2A 12-volt lithium ion cordless drill and driver: it's a mere 2 lbs. The $\frac{3}{8}$ " single-sleeve chuck serves for most drilling chores, and the 7" head is small enough to reach into corners. With two batteries and charger, about \$139. Bosch, (877) 267-2499, boschtools.com

3. FLATHEAD SCREWS

Ever notice how hard it is to find flathead screws? This start-up company offers new and new-old stock, solid-brass flatheads, including #9 screws for hanging solid wood doors. The screws are $\frac{3}{4}$ " long. Set of 48: \$19.95. BrassScrewUSA, (404) 522-9177, etsy.com/shop/BrassScrewUSA

4. THE PUTTY SOLUTION

Ever wondered how to match wood color when making repairs? The solution, alas, has been around for 50 years! These water- and oil-based putty fillers come in 17 wood shades and can also be custom blended. Now part of the Abatron family of products. Color Putty, (608) 325-6033, colorputty.com

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Storing Energy at Home

The technology is ever-changing. High-tech batteries can now power an entire house. **By Mary Ellen Polson**



Power outages are a fact of life in the uber-connected 21st century. When Tesla introduced the first Powerwall in 2015, it was a true innovation: Not only could this sleekly minimalist device charge your car but it could also store the excess energy from solar panels for later use—a real advantage during a blackout.

Sure, you can still buy a conventional generator that runs on natural gas or

propane. But when linked to a solar array, a properly configured battery system can power and store enough energy to maintain the electrical needs of a large house. On some days, it may generate enough excess juice to back-feed the electrical grid.

Offered by manufacturers including Briggs & Stratton and Generac, **new backup systems are based on lithium iron phosphate cells, or LFPs.** While

LFPs have been around since the 1990s, they're too heavy to put into electric vehicles. Unlike the batteries that power EVs, however, LFPs are free of cobalt, a toxic element that may cause batteries to spontaneously ignite. They're also cheaper and they last longer. An LFP that's charged and discharged daily will likely lose only 20 percent of its original capacity over a 10-year period. EV car batteries have a



SimpliPHI's inverters and batteries can be installed indoors or out and paired with solar or other forms of energy generation. **OPPOSITE INSET** Generac's PWRcell system is designed to work with new solar installations.

much shorter lifespan. For the first time, in fact, Tesla's new Powerwall3 will be based on LFP technology.

Another benefit of LFPs: They can be charged to 100 percent of capacity. (EV owners are warned not to fully charge their batteries as it speeds battery aging.) LFP systems make the most sense when powered by solar but are not necessarily solar-dependent. Briggs & Stratton's vertically integrated energy-storage system, SimpliPHI, runs on AC or DC power and can be paired with solar, generator, or electrical-grid power. If the power goes out, "you won't even see the lights flicker," says Daniel

Moyer, a company trainer.

A basic closed-loop SimpliPHI system consists of an LFP-ready inverter, one or more battery packs, and software to monitor it via a smart phone. The inverter converts the battery's direct current to the alternating current your appliances use; the battery packs store and discharge power. Installers like the app because they can monitor them for error codes and even reconfigure them remotely.

In addition, the software makes it possible to download energy off-peak, when rates are lower. That not only benefits homeowners but also reduces

INSTANT POWER

If you're looking for a basic backup system that stores energy for use during an outage, consider a battery-powered kit. Among the most powerful is Ecoflow's Delta Pro kit, part of a line of dozens of portable battery options. The easy-to-maneuver, battery-powered unit connects to an electrical breaker panel using a dedicated power inlet box or transfer switch installed by an electrician. Charge it up and it's ready to use with the flip of a switch. It can also run off solar panels, even portable ones. Best of all, at \$4,000 to \$6,000, it's less than half the price of a fully installed backup system.

BELOW Once a dedicated power inlet box is set up, Ecoflow's Delta Pro kit turns on with the flip of a switch.



50th Anniversary

ANNIVERSARY THROWBACK!

OHJ has been covering the specifics of old-house HVAC since the beginning. Our first special issue on energy came in September of 1981.



Is The Old House Ready For Solar?

By Ross D. Bennett

WHEN WE TALK about retrofitting existing buildings for solar space heating, we're still, for the most part, talking about gas. Solar is more cost-effective than active systems. They are generally less expensive to begin with, easier to integrate, reliable, and simpler in idea. PASSIVE SOLAR techniques will usually not heat your total heating requirements. But using the sun can decrease your dependence on purchased energy, and at the same time add pleasant, usable space to your house. Solar techniques must complement a total program of energy conservation. Out of purchased energy, first, solar heating techniques will only contribute significantly if your house is already energy-efficient.

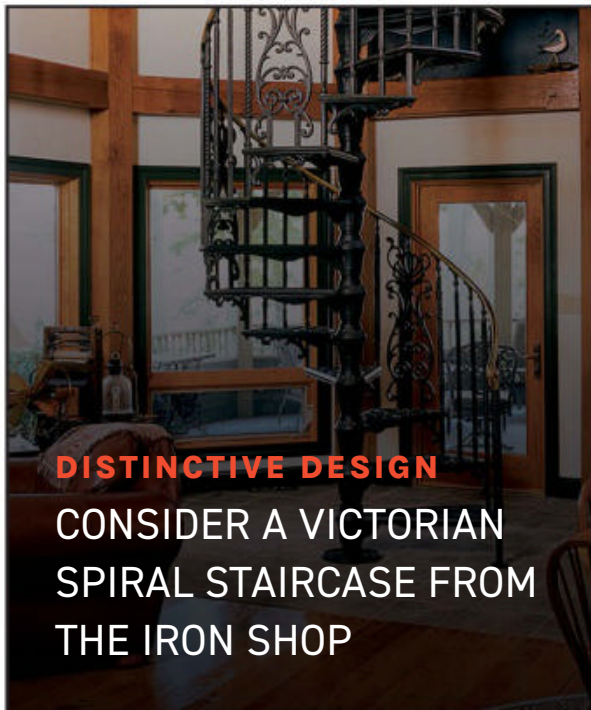
THE MONEY SPENT on energy conservation measures and solar retrofitting should be proportionate to the scale of the heating problem. Energy conservation becomes crucial in areas of 5000 degree days and over. Larger investments—such as the addition of a sunspace—are worth investigating in these areas. PASSIVE SOLAR METHODS can be as simple as making better use of existing windows. When the south-facing wall of a building is not prominent, it may be effective to add more windows. (Be aware of aesthetic and structural considerations.) Clerestory windows and skylights, when they are inconspicuous and well-detailed, can add light and warmth. Closer big projects such as a frame wall that turns a masonry wall into a solar collector.



Continued on p. 108

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ABOVE SimpliPHI's inverter/battery system is in wide use on existing houses in Puerto Rico, which lacks reliable power after damage from successive hurricanes.

demand on strained power grids. You can start small, adding inverters and batteries to increase power or get you through longer outages.

Generac's PWRcell system shares some properties with SimpliPHI but is designed to work with newly installed solar systems. (Tesla's Powerwall works with existing and new.) During the day, the house runs on solar power as solar panels recharge the battery. At night, the house runs on stored energy. When solar power is not sufficient, Generac's DC-coupled generator quickly recharges the cell battery, making it possible to power a home long-term during an outage.

A basic SimpliPHI LFP system with an inverter and two battery packs costs about \$12,000. If you want whole-house energy or are off the grid, consider a battery "cabinet" of six or more units, at \$15,000 and up, exclusive of solar panels. Both types are eligible for the 30 percent energy tax credits enacted in 2022. Talk to your electrician or solar installer about how much capacity you need.

RESOURCES

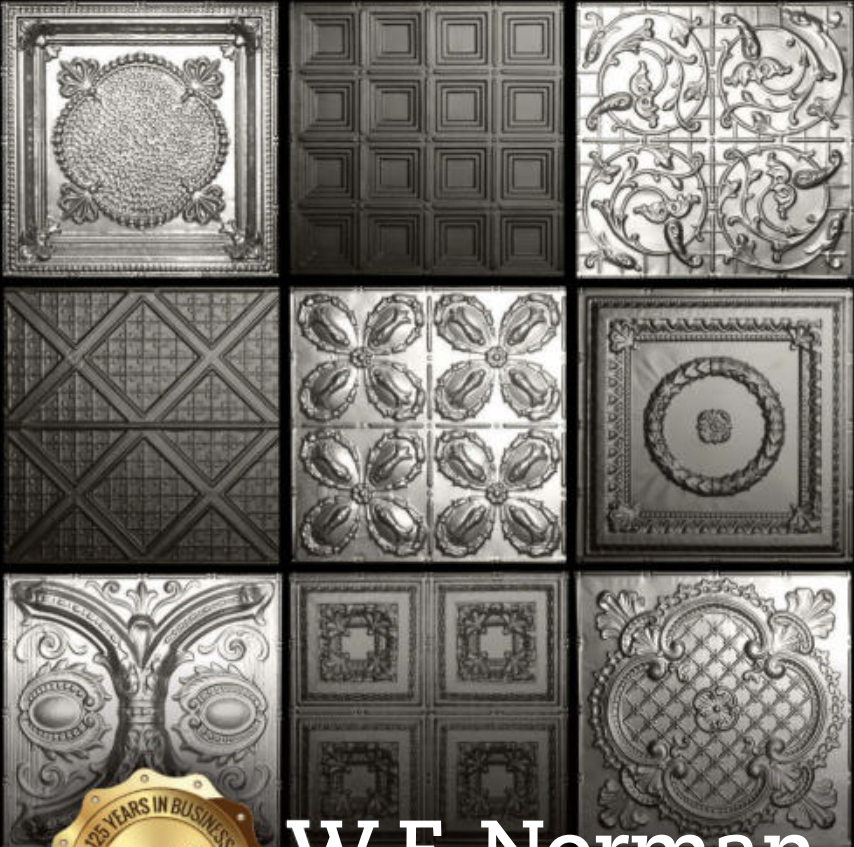
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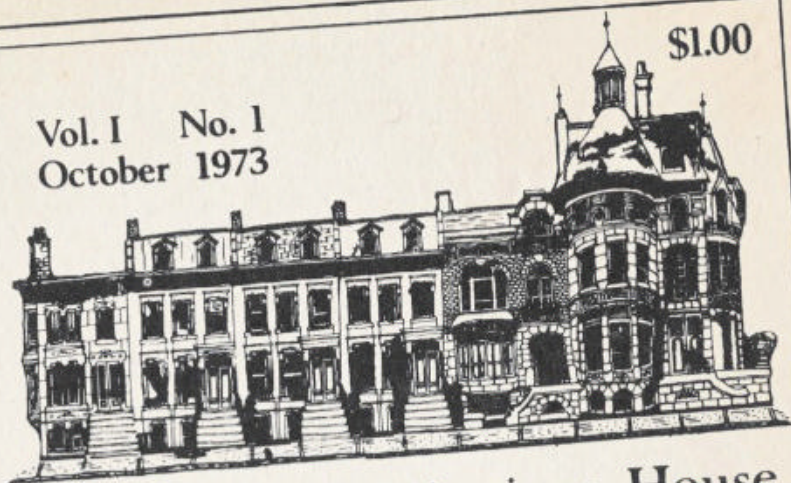


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THE OLD-HOUSE JOURNAL

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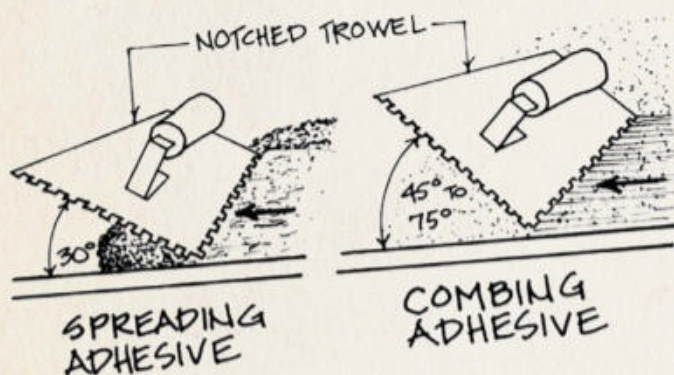
Renovation And Maintenance Ideas For The Antique House

From

VOL. I NO. 1, OHJ has been there for individual homeowners, even as we considered ourselves part of the broader preservation movement. Champions of patina, we nevertheless were keenly aware that old houses need regular maintenance and, indeed, sensitive updates to keep them useful for continued habitation.

By necessity, early issues were full of do-it-yourself advice. Many contractors at the time would

say: "You don't want to save that." "Such-and-such isn't made anymore." "You'll ruin your resale value unless you modernize." Well, OHJ pushed back, advising readers to clean it first and see; repair damage and



abuse but not seek to "make it look new."

Our DIY coverage expanded to include know-how articles for those overseeing contractors and artisans. Our commitment to educating proud owners has never waned--and most readers are still DIYers!

Patricia



Mounting A Ceiling Medallion; Hanging A Chandelier

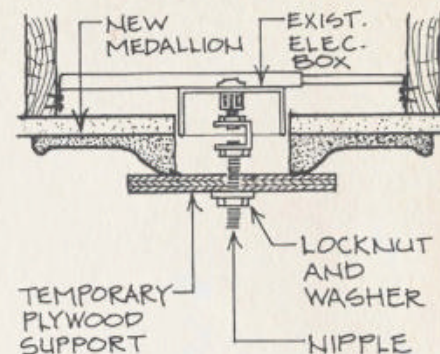
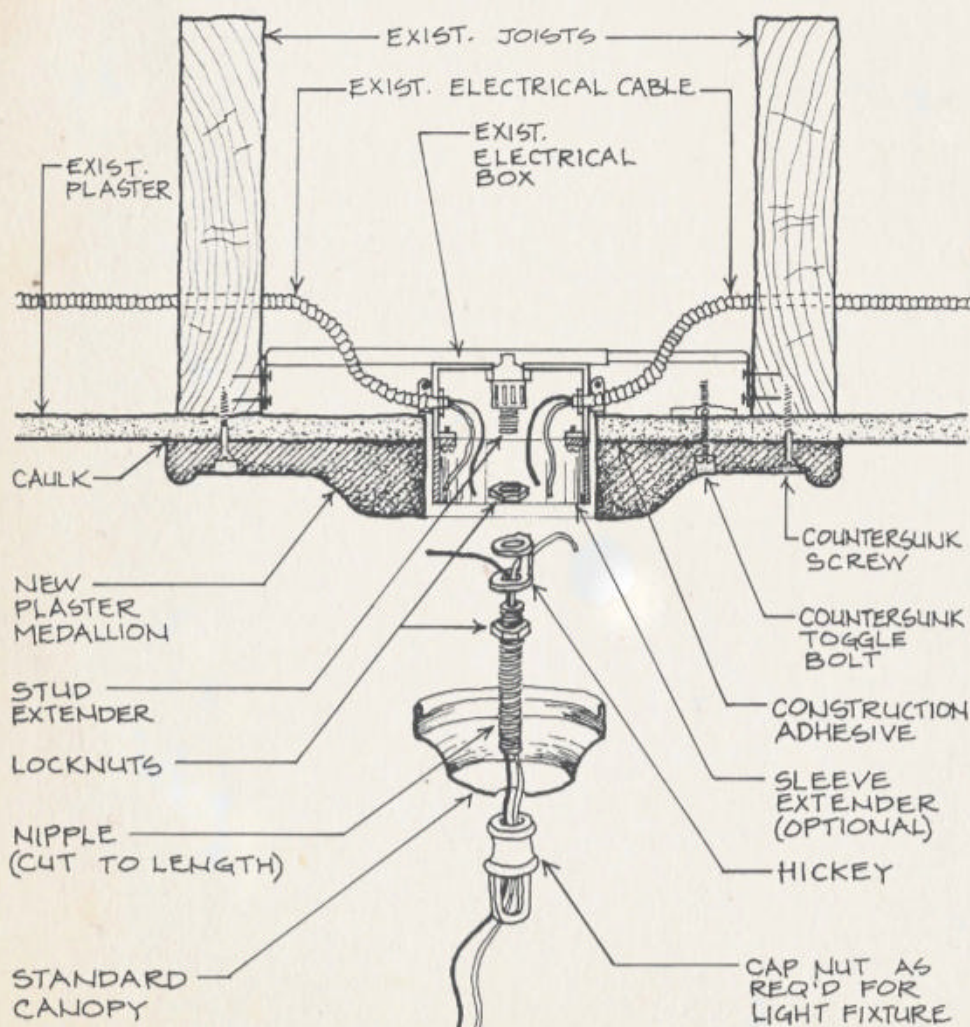
PERHAPS you'd like to install a new ceiling medallion to replace one ripped out in a previous remodeling. Or maybe you want to hang a brass chandelier where only a bare bulb now dangles. Not many carpenters or plasterers have experience installing ceiling medallions. And not many electricians can delicately run wire past ornate plaster. So whether you're going to tackle these projects yourself — or hire a pro to do it — you should know the steps involved. Here's how to handle three typical situations.

1 New Plaster Medallion; Existing Electrical Box

YOU PROBABLY don't need a licensed electrician to hook up the chandelier wires to the electrical box (but check local code). Most codes specify that the face of the box be flush with the medallion. In the drawing, a sleeve extender on the existing electrical box accomplishes this. As plaster is

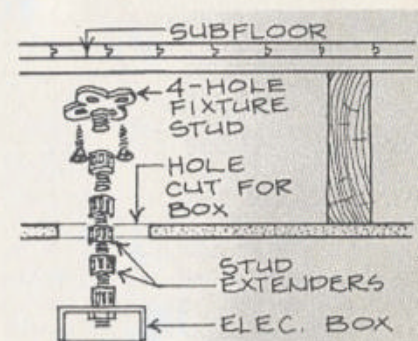
not combustible (foam polymer medallions are), face-mounting the box is not necessary for safety's sake.

To mount the new plaster medallion:
• Center hole in medallion must be larger than a 4-in. round-box. To enlarge hole, drill small holes in the required circle, and cut out with a sabre saw. • Locate and mark ceiling joists. Practice-fit medallion, marking points where it will sit under



ONE WAY TO SUPPORT MEDALLION DURING INSTALLATION

joists. • Pre-drill and countersink holes in medallion so screws will hit joists. For extra support for large medallions, also drill for toggle bolts that will hang on ceiling plaster. • If ceiling is painted, sand to provide firm base for glue. (Sand to bare plaster if paint is thick and cracking, or flaking.) • Apply construction adhesive to back of medallion ('Miracle' is one brand). • Use brace suspended from box (see sketch) to hold medallion as screws are being set. Or use T-brace set on floor. • Drive screws into joist — snugly, but not so tight that the plaster cracks. • Use acrylic caulk to seal edges of medallion; Spackle screw holes. • Fixtures over 10 lb. must hang from a stud in bottom of box. Hook up as shown at left.

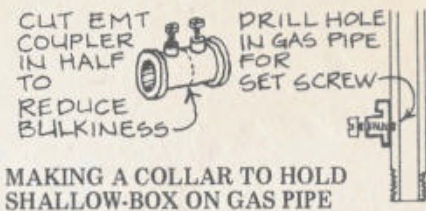
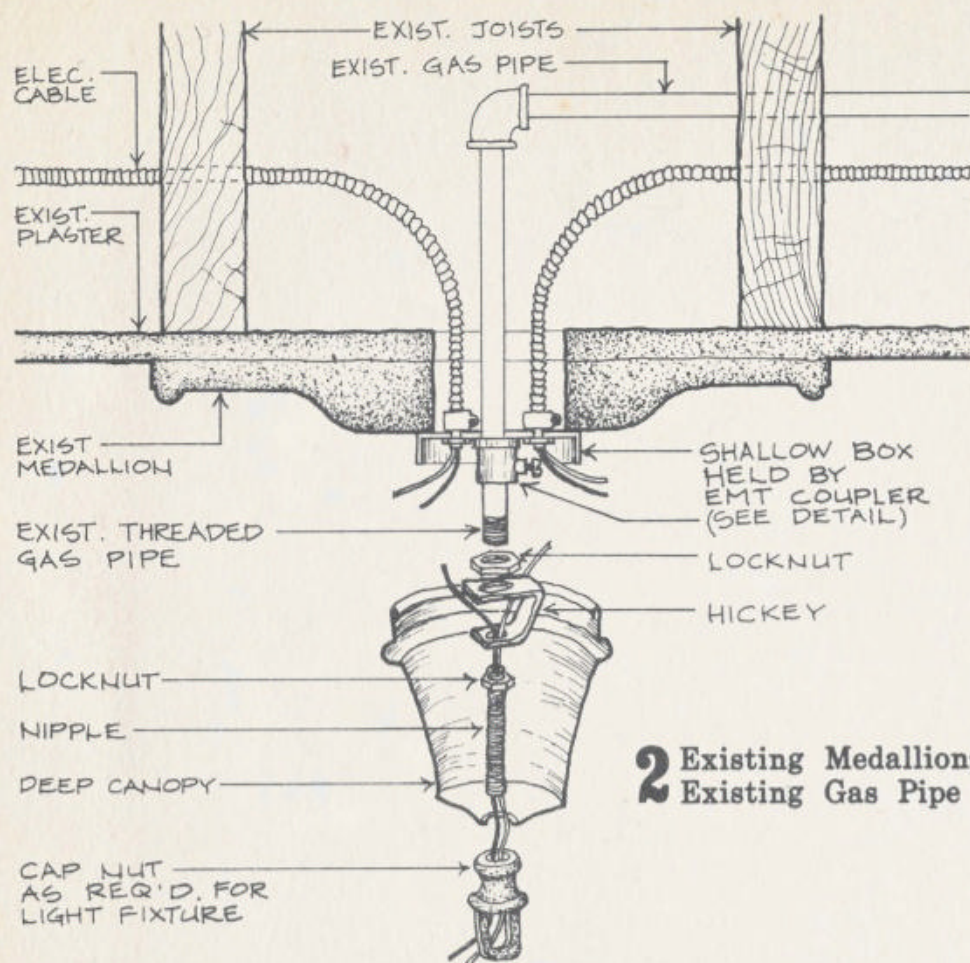


NEW ELECTRICAL BOX IN AN ORNATE PLASTER CEILING

To install a bar hanger and ceiling box as shown in Fig. 3 requires some demolition of ceiling plaster. Here's how to minimize plaster loss when the ceiling has fancy plasterwork or decorative painting:

- Cut a 4-in. round hole in the ceiling with a keyhole saw. That's just big enough so that, with a long screwdriver, you can screw a 4-hole fixture stud to the underside of the floor above.
- Attach stud extender nipples to fixture stud until you can mount a 4-in. round-box flush with ceiling plaster.

Restoration Design File No. 17



HOW DO YOU hang a chandelier when an old gas pipe protrudes through the center of the medallion? You hang the fixture from the gas pipe . . . but you have to know the trick, because there are no standard fittings for hanging the electrical box. (First, be sure the gas pipe is secure enough to bear the weight.)

- Disconnect gas to the gas pipe (you may need a licensed plumber for this step).
- If there's a cap on the end of the pipe, remove it.
- Run any required electrical cable to the medallion. If necessary, widen the hole around the gas pipe to pull cable through.
- Connect cable to a shallow box (½ in. deep) and slide box onto gas pipe.
- Hold box firmly against the medallion with a collar adapted from an EMT (electrical metallic tubing) coupler. If hole in medallion is so big that box slides up pipe into the ceiling, provide backing by attaching another EMT collar above the box.
- Attach a hickey that fits threads on gas pipe.
- Hang fixture from gas pipe as shown. Use a 5-in.-deep canopy to cover box, pipe, and electrical connections.

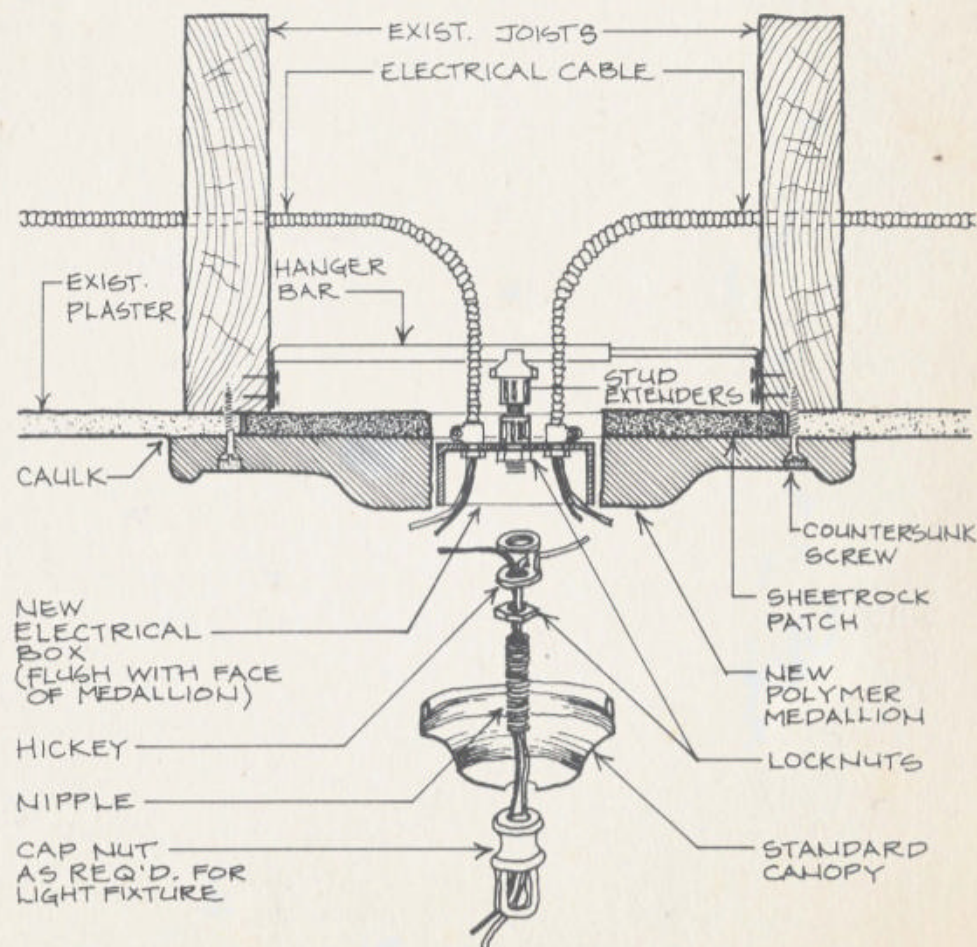
3 New Polymer Medallion; New Electrical Box

FOAM POLYMER medallions are combustible. So be sure to have the electrical box come out to the face of the medallion. That way, all electrical connections are safely enclosed in metal.

- Open ceiling to install hanger bar.
- With stud extender nipples and/or box sleeve, extend 4-in. round-box so it will be level with surface of medallion.
- Connect cables to box; patch ceiling.
- Cut 4-in. diameter hole in center of medallion.
- Tack medallion in place with finish nails or screws driven into joists. (Polymer is lighter than plaster; no adhesive is necessary.)
- Spackle screw holes; seal edge of medallion with acrylic caulk.
- Hang chandelier as shown.

THANKS for their expert commentary to: Roland Greenstein — Roy Electric Co., Brooklyn, NY; Susan Graves — Focal Point, Inc., Atlanta, GA; and Joel Westman — Felber, Inc., Ardmore, PA.

FOR SOURCES OF
NEW CEILING MEDALLIONS
SEE PAGE 163.





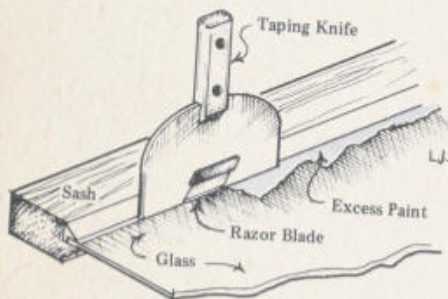
Restorer's Notebook



From Spills To Seals

IT SEEMS LIKE no matter how careful you are, you always get some paint on the glass when you paint window sash. Well, here's a way to turn that problem to your advantage. After the paint has dried, hold a six-inch taping knife against the sash and use it for a guide as you carefully scrape off the excess paint with a razor blade. The idea is to create a paint film that extends beyond the putty and slightly onto the glass. If the blade isn't quite thick enough, just add a layer or two of adhesive tape to the side of the blade which touches the sash. With this method, you'll get a good, tight seal in a crisp, uniform line.

Mark J. Aldieri
Bristol, Conn.



Touch-Up Tips

SAVE EMPTY nail polish bottles. Clean them thoroughly, first with nail polish remover, and then with soap and water. Let the bottles and little brushes dry thoroughly.

WHENEVER you paint a room, piece of furniture, etc., save some of the paint by filling one of the clean bottles. (You can use a clean eyedropper for dripless filling.) Then, whenever you need to touch up minor scratches and nicks, you have the paint right at hand for quick, non-messy cosmetic repairs.

Anne Roquemore
Montgomery, Ala.

Removing Old Mortar From Bricks

IN THE PROCESS of restoring our 1750's colonial house, we discovered a trick that worked very well for removing old mortar from antique bricks. (Simply trying to bang the mortar off with a hammer is a slow, painful job—as well as harmful to the soft old bricks.)

WE BURIED the old bricks in a pile of oak leaves and left them out in the weather for about six months. After that time, the old mortar was softened to a point where it came off very easily. Presumably, it is the acidity in the oak leaves that breaks down the substances in the old mortar. This procedure proved to be both simple and quite safe for the old bricks.

Jane Freeman
Brimfield, Mass.

Hot-Dipped Nails

YOUR CARPENTER is sure to protest, but before he does any exterior work, buy him a box of 16d hot-dipped finishing nails. The coated or plated (galvanized) common nails he'll bring to the job will result in an unattractive appearance and eventually leave rust stains. Because the finishing nails are headless, they can be countersunk and then caulked over. Nails grip with their shanks, and so the rough surface of the hot-dipped nail will hold better than the smoother surface of your carpenter's cherished common.



Charles W. Wilson
Mechanicsburg, Pa.

Removing Tar

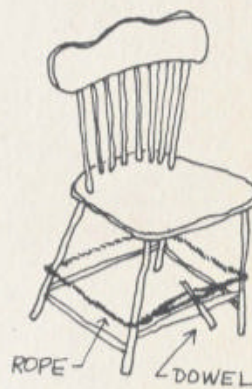
HERE'S SOME GOOD ADVICE for anyone stuck using tar on their house: Baby oil is a very useful solvent for removing any of the stuff that you may get on your skin or in your hair. Apply some to exposed skin surfaces prior to working with the tar -- it can also prevent sticky problems from happening!

Joe Longo
New York, N.Y.

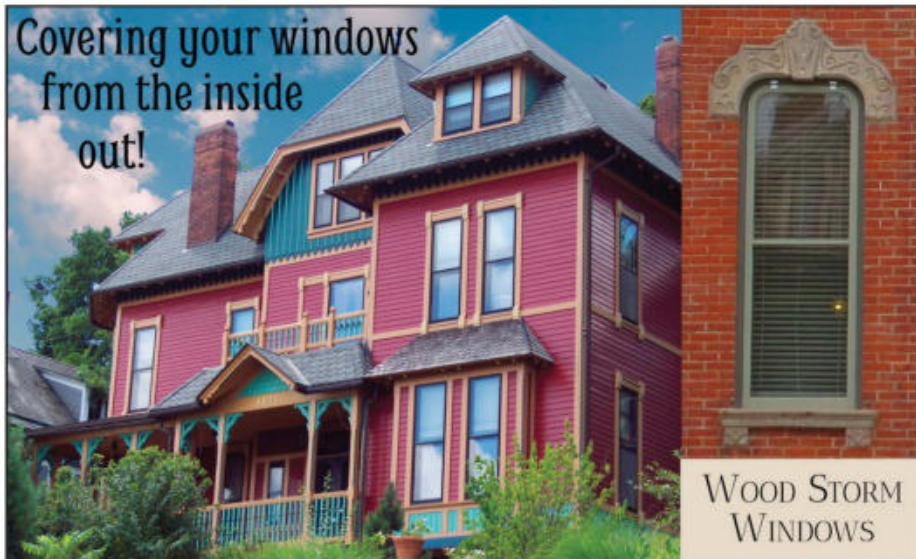
Furniture In Bondage

ALL OLD-HOUSE OWNERS seem to have rickety old chairs that need to be reglued or drawers that are falling apart because the old glue has dried. It can be very difficult to clamp together the many odd-sized pieces that need to be glued. Sometimes extensive and expensive clamping systems seem to be needed.

MY SOLUTION is a length of sash cord or similar rope. It can conform to any shape, inexpensively clamp large pieces, evenly distribute the required pressure, and it will not mar the surface. First do a dry run. Make sure all pieces fit together well and then tie them together with the rope to insure proper fit and alignment. Then take the pieces apart again and apply the glue. To take up the slack in the rope and increase the clamping pressure, use a dowel or stick, tourniquet style. Tighten until the rope is taut, but don't overtighten.



John Kornbluh
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“ To save time, the roofers didn’t  
remove the old asphalt shingles.  
Now we have a leak! ”



I live in an old farmhouse with a vaulted ceiling in the living room. The room is open to an adjacent space with a ceiling that slopes away from the fireplace chimney. About 10 years ago, I replaced an aging roof with standing-seam metal. To save time and money, the roofers didn’t remove the old asphalt shingles. A leak continues to reappear in the sloped ceiling near the chimney. We’ve repaired the ceiling and reflashed the chimney, but nothing works. —*Jessica McElhaney*



### Share Your Story!

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

### THE FIX

In retrospect, you’ve probably realized that the mistake was not ripping off the old shingles before adding the new roofing. There may be a tiny opening or other damage within or under the old layers, which allows water to percolate through despite the new roof covering.

To find the source of the leak, start at the stain. Remove the wood planks and insulation to look inside for wet areas. If possible, track the water back to the source. Next, look for visible evidence on the roof itself. Use a ladder, wear secure footwear, and be extremely cautious: falls from roofs and ladders are far too common and can result in serious injury. Hire a professional roofer if you have any doubts. Go over the entire roof area and check for pinhole leaks, dents, corrosion, and loose flashing or seams, especially in roof valleys near the leak.

If nothing turns up, try soaking the roof with a garden hose. With someone inside to check for signs of incursion, start a gentle water flow at the lowest section of the area of the stain. Then wet the higher portion. Continue to move up the roof, including spraying or wetting roof valleys and flashed areas. With luck, you’ll be able to pinpoint where the leak originates. It should be possible to repair it by replacing or reflashing a small section of the metal roof. If not, you’ll have to remove the roof over that section, then strip away the old shingles. You may still need to do additional detective work before you can repair areas of obvious damage.



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# Saving Whole Houses!

A Wyoming entrepreneur launches Shacks on Racks to keep houses slated for demolition out of the landfill. **By Karen Marley**



Some people scour thrift shops to find salvaged house parts. In a service born from necessity (and her own frustration), Esther Judge-Lennox scours paperwork to save buildings. The Shacks on Racks founder follows the Teton County Historic Preservation Board's demolition process to find houses headed for the landfill.

Tucked into an emerald valley filled with pine trees and crisp alpine rivers, surrounded by massive peaks, Wyoming's Teton County is an irresistible locale. The Jackson Hole ski resort is legendary; Jackson is the quintessential mountain town of the old West. Up until now, that is. As the most expensive county in the United States, Teton County's cost of living has been squeezing out teachers, health-care workers, service providers, mail carriers—all those people who hold a community together. Jackson never saw it coming.

"Many large lots are zoned for high density and people are taking advantage

of that," Esther says. "We're losing downtown Jackson ... rapidly."

Weary of watching the town's historic homes be demolished even amidst a deepening housing crisis, Esther launched the ultimate recycling effort. Founded in 2016, Shacks on Racks is a concierge service for all things related to moving homes slated for demolition. The spark came from a darling little 1947 bungalow destined for the landfill, now remodeled for new life.

"Honestly, I felt physically sick," Esther recalls. "It's a struggle for so many people to live and work here and the idea of this cottage going into the trash blew my mind. So we moved it."

Once a house is identified, Esther runs a site visit with an engineer, architect, house mover, and builder if one is available. Together they assess how to transport the building, what will be involved in putting it back together and meet building codes, and what the move will cost. Once a price is

## The Cost

*Total salvage costs vary depending on the structure and how the buyer plans to use the building. A salvaged cabin becoming a garden shed or office certainly costs less than would an entire house. Costs fluctuate, of course, based on size and the new owner's tastes, but the salvage is always cheaper than the cost of building new. Add to that the massive environmental savings of not scrapping materials.*

**ABOVE** A 1935 Sears-kit cottage with original doors and built-in trundle bed, on the move. **INSET** Shacks on Racks founder Esther Judge-Lennox.





**ABOVE** The first Shacks on Racks project, shown just after the move: a 1947 house presided over by Bobbers the gnome. "It's not modernized and feels of its era," says the owner. The two-inch, cedar plank siding is original. **LEFT** After assessment and budgeting, the house's availability was announced and a buyer found. **FAR LEFT** In the 1947 bungalow, the funky antique chandelier is style repurposed. While "modern" is preferred in new homes here, authentic mountain style is more eclectic: "piecing together with what you have around is the Jackson way," says the owner of the vintage look.



**ABOVE** In the tiny home, the kitchen doubles as the laundry room. The efficient space has everything within arm's reach.

established, Shacks on Racks announces its availability.

Buyers need to be quick. People typically have about 30 days to claim a house. The prospective buyer has to have a place to put the structure and access to cash for the move. That can fall anywhere from \$3,000 to \$50,000. (Developers are encouraged to donate their scrappage fees to the moving cost. On rare occasions, they do.) The moving costs may seem formidable but still come in way under what it costs to build a new house from scratch.

To date, Shacks on Racks has saved 24 homes and diverted 1,454,150 pounds from landfills. One of those homes is that original 1940s Craftsman cottage where Ryan Dorgan and his wife, Emily Mieure, live.

"There's so much character in our home," says Emily. Ryan says, "The fact that it has a connection to [the old town of Jackson] is meaningful and special."

Demure and tidy at just 432 square feet, the cottage lives large. It's filled with natural light; an especially big picture window has a mountain view. Details include original, narrow cedar-plank exterior siding, a cute front porch, and a cozy eating nook.

Another example is a mid-century

design of 1949, cheery in red and affectionately dubbed Red House. This one marks the launch of a new type of Shacks on Racks project, with the aim to help buyers overcome those cash and property barriers that can prevent them from acquiring a salvaged house. Esther and her husband, Philip Lennox, had purchased land specifically for a Shacks on Racks home to refurbish for selling. Red House, which was "one of those iconic homes on the corner of Jackson's historic Genevieve block," came along at the right time.

The house had an awkward addition that they left behind. Four bedrooms and three and a-half baths make it ideal for a family. Esther was able to save 50% of the walls, 100% of the floors, and 100% of the truss system. "The Red House has required more work than we've ever put into a 'shack' and yet we're still under budget [compared to a new house of comparable size]," Esther says.

Shacks on Racks has salvaged and rehomed different types of buildings, from a taxidermy cabin with a second-floor deck to an apartment building. Structure by structure, Shacks on Racks delivers a home-sweet-home to those who care about the history, beauty, and personality of Teton County's original character.

## Red House



**ABOVE** Dubbed Red House, this 1949 structure has mid-century styling. The house was sold along with the lot to put it on. **LEFT** The interior has an updated, practical mid-century vibe. A vintage enamel sink (with a small blemish) adds patina to the crisp, unexpectedly spacious kitchen. Brass fixtures are on point, timeless yet currently a stylish trend.





## Shacks on Racks PRIMER

*What's happening in Teton County echoes across the country, as vacationers and developers flock to picturesque locations. Wherever you live, you can save a house and enjoy the benefits that come with keeping a good building out of the landfill. From Shacks on Racks founder Esther Judge-Lennox:*

- **Contact your municipality** to understand the local preservation process developers must follow before demolishing a home—so you can identify what's going to be scrapped.
- Find a house mover who has connections in the area where you want to relocate. **"House movers are knowledgeable and incredibly experienced,"** Esther explains. "Take advantage of that."
- Purchase property for your future home if you don't already have it. **Be mindful of utility connections** and accessibility (roads and a driveway.)
- You must have access to knowledge about how houses are built. **Hire a structural engineer and architect** to assess the house. Understand that you'll need a proper foundation for your rescue.
- Be ready to **pay for moving costs** in cash.
- Move in and feel great about **saving your unique home!**



Esther Judge-Lennox at a moving site.

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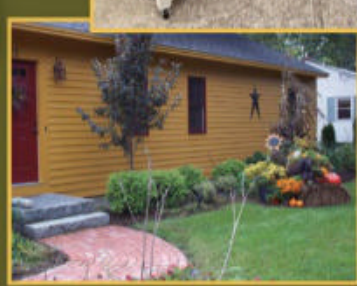
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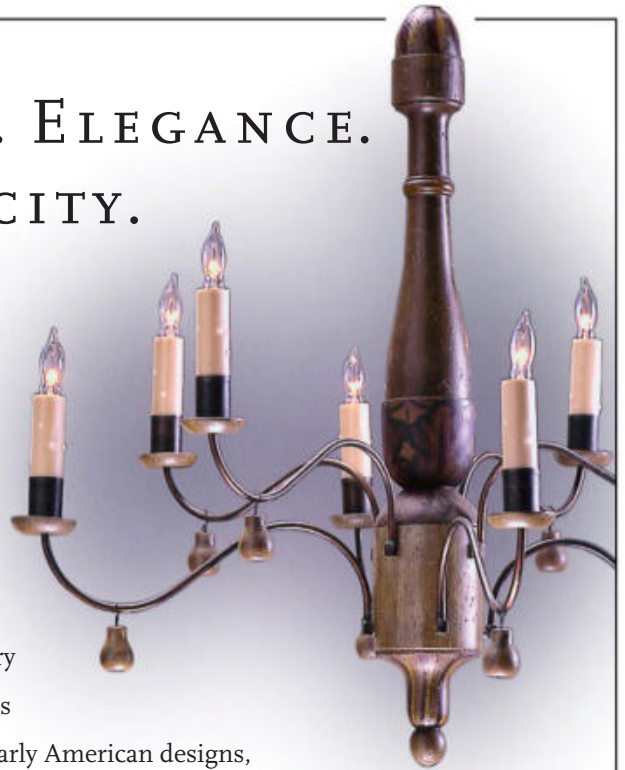
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# Jacking on Firm Footing

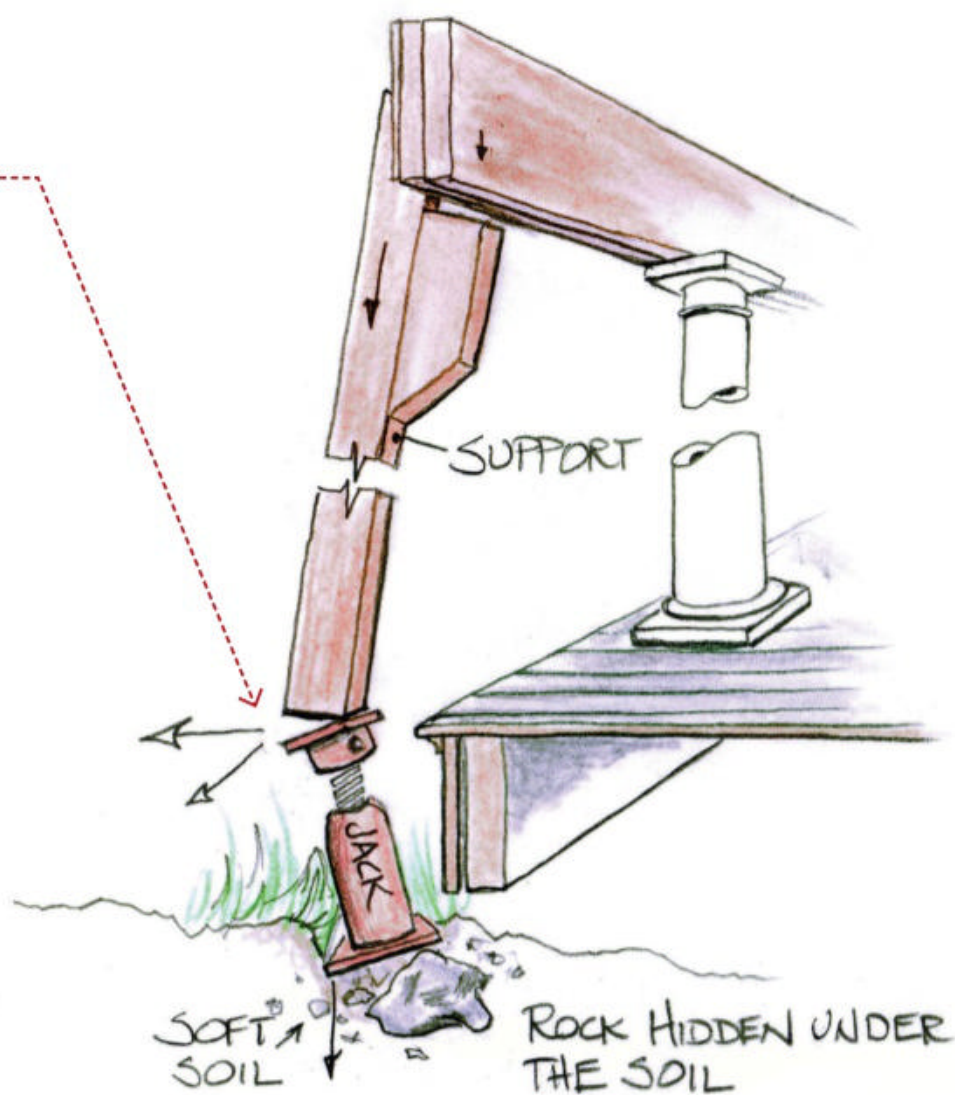
Small, hydraulic or screw jacks capable of safely lifting and supporting several tons are conveniently purchased online. (Be careful of buying used equipment, particularly hydraulic.)

Although such projects move beyond “everyday maintenance,” the porch is a likely place where jacks might be used by a homeowner. You can’t beat the safety and convenience of jacks when you need to remove a structural porch column for repair or replacement. Being able to “lift” the roof an eighth of an inch will make all the difference between an afternoon job and a nightmare. The key is to make sure that the jack is set on firm footing. **By Ray Tschoepe**

## WRONG WAY

### SUNK IN DIRT

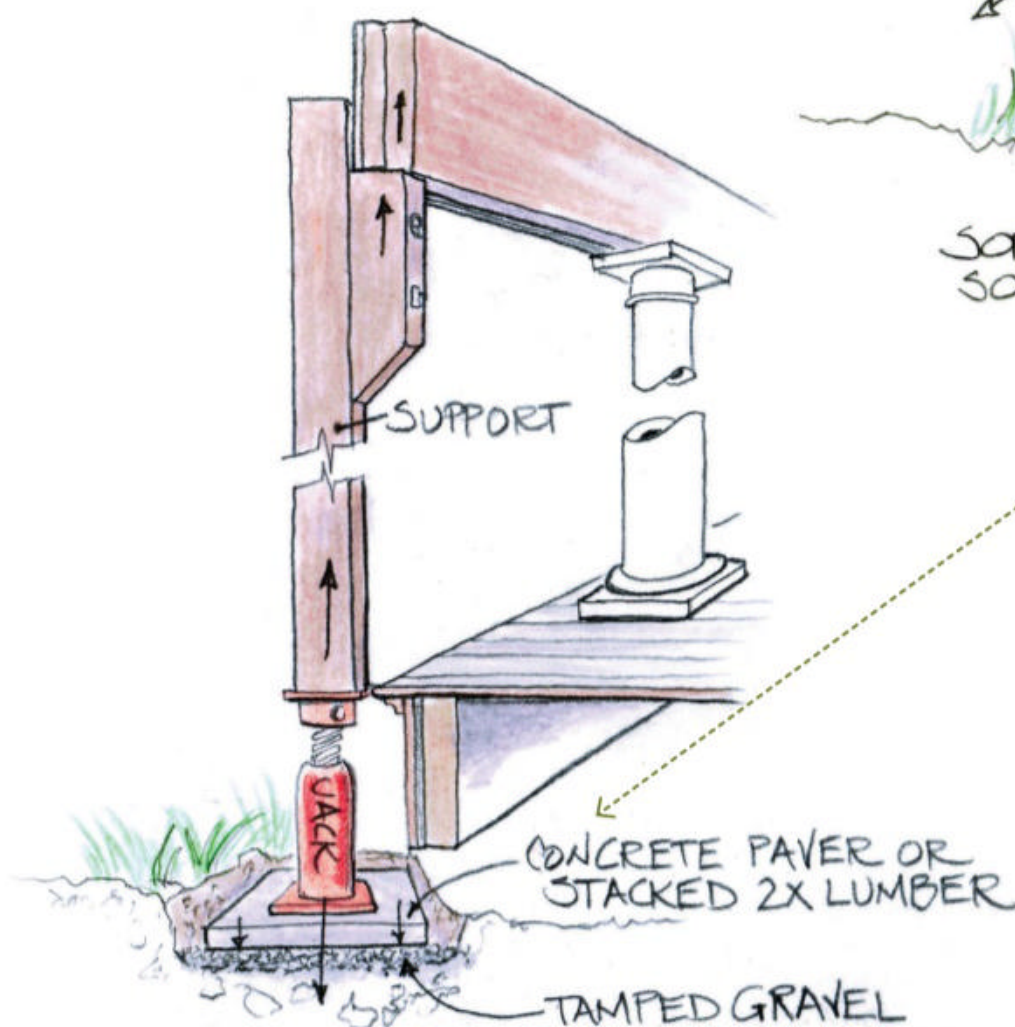
When deciding where to place a jack, don’t assume the soil is “solid enough.” Do some preparation: Dig around for soft or wet spots and any rocks. Make corrections and tamp the soil before placing the jack (or see it list later on). Think ahead, too. Be sure you won’t need to dig near the jack later, which can undermine it.



## RIGHT WAY

### CREATE A BASE

Determine where you need to place the jack. (Close to the column position is best.) Excavate a few inches of soil to create a one- to two-foot-square hole. Create a flat bottom and add gravel, tamping it down into the dirt until it feels solid. Level as you go. Install two alternating layers of 2x lumber (or a concrete patio paver) and tamp level. Rest the jack on this surface and begin the work.





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# INSPIRE

## VERMONT BARBER

A SERIAL RESTORER BRINGS  
BACK AN IMPORTANT QUEEN  
ANNE-STYLE HOUSE, EVEN  
COMMISSIONING PERIOD  
STENCIL DECORATION.

page 94

An antique tall-case clock stands in the entry of the 1895 house by mail-order architect George Barber.

CAROLYN BATES



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**A NEST TO FEATHER**  
OHJ fans and their Foursquare.  
+ TIPS FOR A VINTAGE BATH

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**A DECORATED INTERIOR ENDURES**  
Remarkable finishes in the Catskills.  
+ BEAUX ARTS LIGHTING & BEYOND

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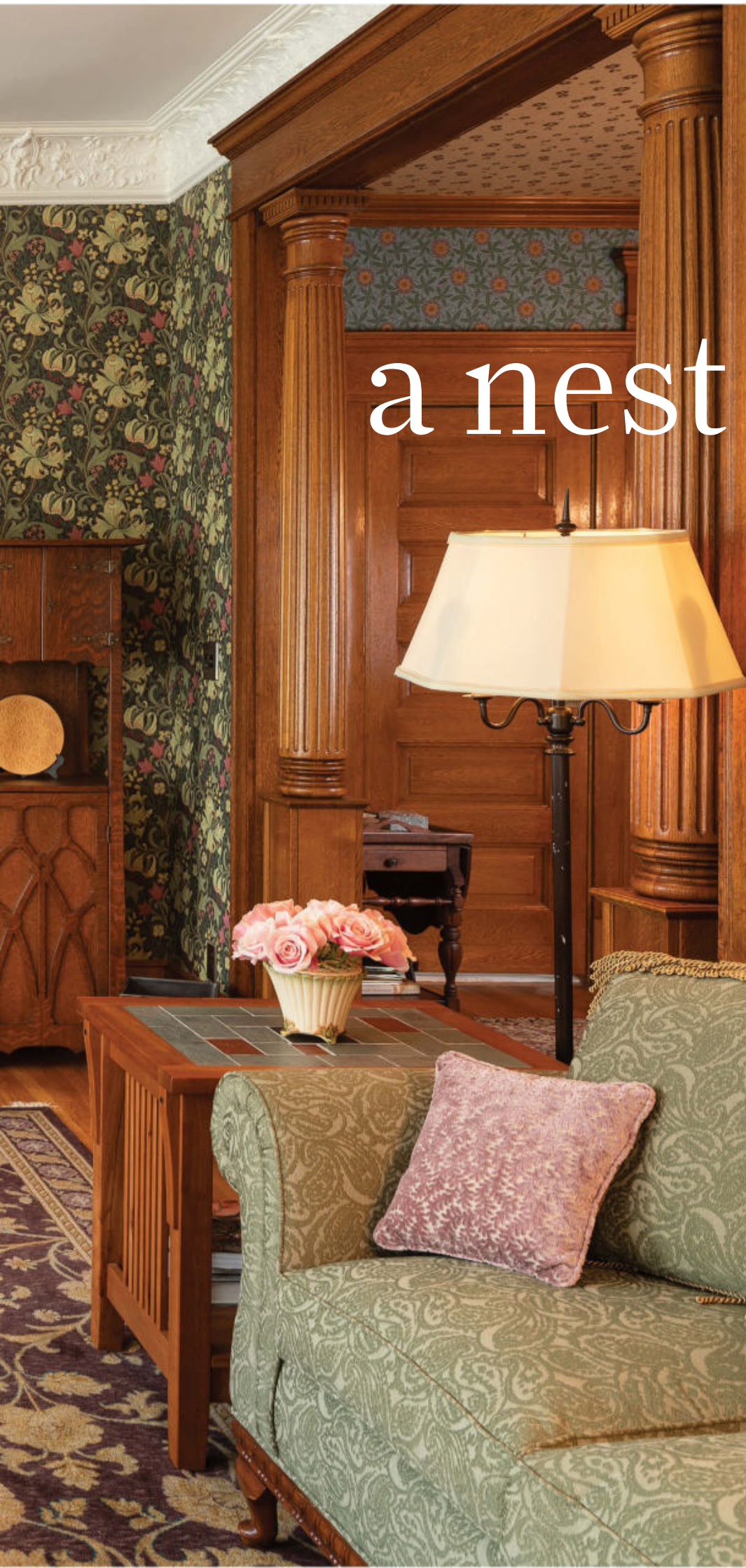
**QUEEN ANNE RESTORED**  
A Victorian victory in Vermont.  
+ STENCILING SECRETS





**ABOVE** The back parlor is centered on a handsome fireplace that required extensive restoration. The room is furnished in an Arts & Crafts aesthetic with Morris & Co.'s 'Golden Lily' wallpaper. Comfortable armchairs and a sofa by Lillian August are upholstered in voided velvets and green matelasse (on the sofa). **OPPOSITE** The 1901 transitional Foursquare in Minnesota is welcoming with a broad front porch and generous windows with unusual muntin patterns. Daylight streams into rooms inside.





# a nest to feather

Over the years, at restoration shows, the editors had met a St. Paul couple fixing up their American Foursquare, which they hoped would someday be featured in *OHJ*.

**BY BRIAN D. COLEMAN**

**PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WRIGHT**









**RIGHT** Arts & Crafts tiles and ceramics rest on the mantel carved by Gallenberg Studios. 'Wildwood Arts & Crafts Sconces' in Old Brass, from Rejuvenation, are outfitted with feather art-glass shades. **OPPOSITE** (from top left) The front music room is papered with 'Aldworth', a 1910 Voysey pattern in gold on mottled cream. The stained- and leaded-glass windows are original. • Homeowners Pam and Kevin Johnson, with their Papillon spaniels Giles and Cedric, relax on the porch swing, along with our West Coast editor and author Brian Coleman. • A beaded Turkish floor lamp illuminates the bottom of the stairwell papered with Bradbury & Bradbury's 'Tiger & Crane' in Pompeiian/Burgundy. • The oak dining room has Bradbury's blue 'Passion Flower' paper.

### OBJETS D'ART

The period house turned these owners into collectors. Vases are contemporary Arts & Crafts pieces; the English tiles are ca. 1910.





P

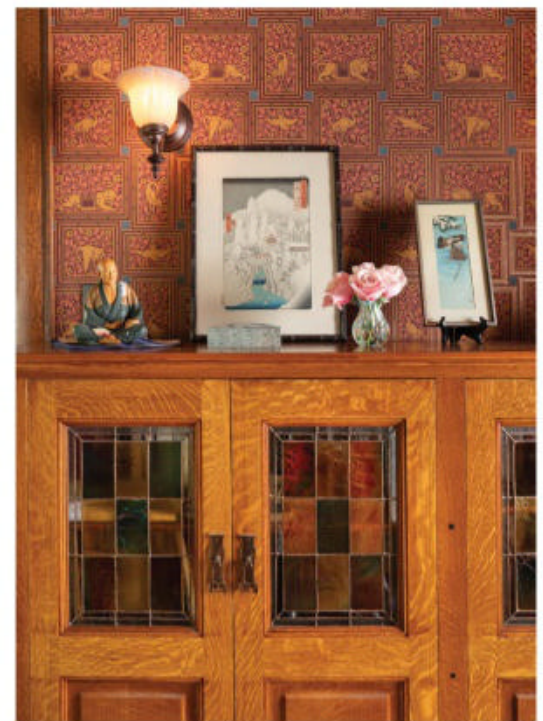
*am and Kevin Johnson had always wanted an old house*

but, while raising their two daughters, settled for a practical suburban Colonial. When in 2001 they became empty nesters, they decided it was time to follow their passion. These long-time OHJ subscribers began searching for a historic property; they were intrigued by a transitional house with late Victorian and Arts & Crafts elements. Built in 1901, it offered a large, welcoming foyer; a parlor on the second floor would accommodate their grand piano. The kitchen had a screened back porch. Quarter-sawn oak woodwork and paneling and a wide staircase gave an ambiance warm and inviting to the foursquare interior. Pausing to sit on the landing after the first walk-through, Kevin and Pam knew this was the house.

Substantial restoration, however, was in store. This had been a boardinghouse for nurses during WWII so every bedroom door had a deadbolt and padlock. The house had been divided into separate living areas with kitchens added in both the foyer and upstairs. Bats nesting in the attic regularly visited downstairs (Pam remembers taking a shower with a baby bat), squirrels ran races in the eaves, and mice scampered inside kitchen walls. Woodwork was gouged and disfigured, the fireplace mantel was pulling away from the wall and tile was missing, kitchen floor joists had been cut at one end and dangled precariously.

Outside, crumbling aluminum storms covered the windows, gutters were broken or missing, the chimney was in danger of collapse, and the small backyard was a patch of dirt covered in buckthorn.

Pam refused to cook in the kitchen so that's where they started, tearing the mice-infested room down to the studs. In homage to the original Swedish owners and in-



**ABOVE** (from top left) The built-in hutch features quarter-sawn oak; fluted columns were replicated here, for the fireplace mantel, and for an arch between living and dining rooms. • Dining room and foyer have papered ceilings. • For the foyer, a built-in oak and iridescent-glass bookcase was commissioned from Gallenberg Studios. Japanese woodblock prints rest on top. • The foyer has a writing alcove. The octagonal oak center table is ca.1900.

spired by the artist Carl Larsson, the couple created a bright and sunny aerie—adding a broad expanse of windows above the sink with a shelf for plants. Marmoleum flooring in Serene Blue and a Wedgewood-blue Aga cooker went in. Trustworth Studio's wallpaper 'Woodland Carpet Minor', based on an 1897 C.F.A. Voysey design, is further brightened by simple white cabinets.

They didn't plan to refinish the first-floor oak floors. Once the soiled wall-to-wall carpeting was removed, however, they decided to have the old flooring professionally refinished, even though it was covered in decayed padding and riddled with nails.

The parlor fireplace was an eyesore as the original mantel had been removed and "updated" with an out-of-scale replacement. Original surround tiles had been removed and the sides plastered over, then





## COZY KITCHEN

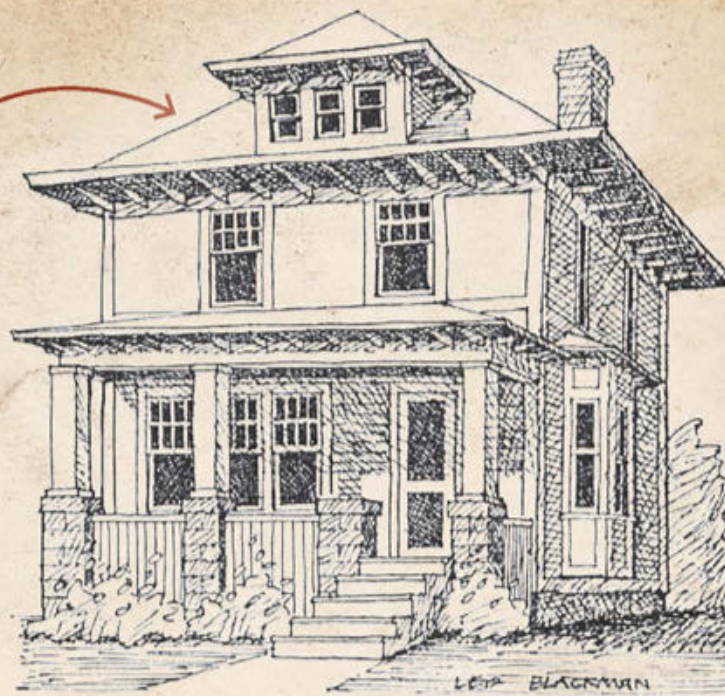
The kitchen is newly interpreted but occupies the original space in the house.

Inspired by the paintings and home of Swedish artists Carl and Karin Larsson, the homeowners created a bright and airy kitchen with plants growing before a bank of windows over the sink and a simple blue-and-white palette. Trustworth Studios' 'Woodland Carpet Minor' wallpaper lends a cheerful note. The original screened-in back porch is visible beyond.

## ANNIVERSARY THROWBACK!



*When architecture books skipped from the Prairie School to International Style, OHJ analyzed builders' catalogs ca. 1900–1930 to isolate previously ignored styles. We named the “modern type of square house,” often with a hipped roof and dormers, the American Foursquare, by 1982.*



The American Foursquare

January 1982





**ABOVE LEFT** The main bath was reconfigured with a clawfoot tub, subway-tile wainscot, and floral 'Augustine' wallpaper from Thibaut.

**CENTER** Bradbury's 'Tiger & Crane' paper and 'Herter Frieze' decorate the stairwell.

**RIGHT** Stained-glass transoms, based on existing stained-glass designs in main-floor windows, were commissioned. Upstairs, the hall was given visual interest with Voysey's engaging 'The Huntsman' wallpaper.



crudely painted in imitation of bricks. The damper was broken, vents were missing, and the fireplace was pulling from the wall.

They began by squaring up the chimney, adding alcoves for bookcases on either side. A new mantel was commissioned from Gallenberg Studios, with detailing similar to the original built-in hutch in the dining room; matching, fluted oak columns were carved to replace those missing from the archway between living and dining rooms. North Prairie Tileworks replicated tile based on the few tiles, gold and green and brown-speckled, that remained on the hearth, making the fireplace once again the focus of the room. The parlor was properly done up in a warm Arts & Crafts aesthetic with 'Golden Lily' wallpaper by Morris & Co., anchored by an earth-tone 'Sphinx' carpet of New Zealand wool, from Old World Weavers.

The dining room retained its built-in china hutch and wainscoting, though the woodwork was buried under coats of caked white enamel. The quarter-sawn oak woodwork was taken off the walls to be stripped off site, cleaned, and finally reinstalled. (The tedious process took more



than a year.) The hutch got new drawers and cabinet fronts as well as beveled-glass mirrors. Bradbury & Bradbury's 'Passion Flower' wallpaper in Aesthetic Blue adds an elegant note.

The second-floor bath (originally the only one in the house—besides a toilet tucked under the basement stairs) was awkward. An exposed PVC pipe doubled as the towel rack; mildew was spreading upward on walls, vinyl flooring had buckled, and those bats were still visiting. The owners brought pumpling up to code and added a period-appropriate clawfoot tub and glass surround, a wainscot of white subway tile, and Thibaut's 'Augustine'-pattern wallpaper.

The upstairs corridor had been a narrow, dark passage. Stained-glass transoms replace plain glass originals, adding color and interest while still allowing light transfer and ventilation. Japanned copper hardware was added. Furthering the horizontal aspect of the long hall is Trustworth's lively 'Huntsman' wallpaper, a storybook pattern in broad bands, which expands the space.

Outside, rotted cedar siding had to be replaced. New siding has been painted in pleasant Middlebury Brown, with trim in Welcome White and accents in Marblehead Gold. The missing balustrades on the porch have been replaced. Storm windows by Marvin now protect original stained glass.

Of course, a good house is never finished, and Pam and Kevin Johnson have a list of future projects, from reroofing to replacing windows on the back porch.



# TIPS FOR A VINTAGE BATH

## MIX ANTIQUE, REPRODUCTION & TIMELESS ELEMENTS.

➔ At the turn of the 20th century, houses with indoor plumbing typically had only one full bathroom, designed as a “modern and sanitary” space with easy-to-clean surfaces and three fixtures. Whether you’re refurbishing an existing bath or adding a second, design today can accommodate period style while offering function and convenience.

- **Start with the walls and floors.** A subway-tile wainscot (often 5’ high) or a tiled floor in one- or two-inch hexagons or penny rounds (or basketweave etc.) enhances almost any old-house bathroom. Consider an accent such as “daisy” insets or a Greek-key border. In children’s and rural bathrooms, beaded-board wainscots painted white were pretty standard.

- **Install a throwback sink.** Pedestal sinks were popular from the end of the 19th century through the 1930s. They take up less actual and visual space than a sink in a cabinet. Made of vitreous china or enameled cast iron, they were white early on but by the late 1920s came in colors from jadeite and salmon to burgundy, navy, and red. Alternatively, consider a console sink, usually attached to the wall and with two front legs. A marble top and drop-in basin makes it elegant. Cross-handled faucets, nickel-plated or brass with hot and cold porcelain buttons, are still made.

- **An old-fashioned bathtub, either freestanding with claw feet or, later, built in with rounded Deco lines, is a functional splurge.** Initially marketed (in 1873) for livestock, stand-alone cast-iron tubs with porcelain

interiors and rolled rims were soon in demand as part of the indoor-plumbing suite. Copper tubs were a high-end choice. A shower ring for hanging a curtain and the shower apparatus were soon added.

- **What about the toilet?** The first flush toilet was invented in 1596 but indoor “water closets” weren’t standard until the late 19th century, as city sewers were becoming commonplace. Fancy and odd-shaped toilets, including those painted with Delft designs and those with a gravity-powered high tank, date to the late-Victorian era but often remained in houses until the postwar period. Simple vitreous-china bowls were common in the early 20th century. If you choose a true vintage toilet, check with your

plumber on whether it will fit the room’s rough-in.

- **Wall sconces light up a period room.** Porcelain, brass, and nickel-plated sconces are available today. Disable any convenience outlet on the plate of an antique sconce. It’s a terrible shock hazard. —*Brian D. Coleman*



**ABOVE** Baths of the early 20th century were “sanitary”: porcelain, tile, nickel, and white enamel paint. **BELOW** This inspired bath features Eastlake-style woodwork and gas-light-era fixtures. **FAR LEFT** The vintage “elephant truck” toilet is in the author’s authentic Victorian bathroom.





# A DECORATED INTERIOR endures

This house in Hunter, New York, offers a genuine example of high-style wall and ceiling decoration ca.1920. **By Mary Ellen Polson / photos by Steve Gross & Susan Daley**







## PRESERVED STATE

Rooms are remarkably original at Clovesend, a house in the same family for three generations. Unpainted woodwork, decorative finishes, period lighting, and antiques remain.

The owner's mother and grandmother collected and sold such antiques as this intricately carved occasional table.

**OPPOSITE** The full-width verandah is supported by columns with capitals of the composite order—a hallmark of classical styles like Beaux Arts.



## ELEGANT COMFORT

The house is transitional, simpler and more modern than those of the Victorian era, with a casual air. Windows are many and large, fixtures designed for electricity.







**RIGHT** A side view of Clovesend: the house was closed up every winter with shutters that have been continually maintained. **ABOVE** A floor vase rests by a demilune console. The wall covering is varnished Lincrusta, an embossed material similar to linoleum. **BELOW** The 1880s pump organ in the front parlor came from a piano store in Vermont. **BOTTOM RIGHT** The view through the foyer lit by a colorful bowl fixture. **OPPOSITE** A game table and chairs sit in front of a bay window accented with stained glass. The combination bowl and shower light fixture likely is original.







Still furnished with family pieces from the 1930s and '40s, the main living room is lavishly decorated with embossed, faux-finish wall treatments. **INSET, OPPOSITE** A bowed wall in the living room features a custom relief treatment. While it appears to be carved from wood, the plaster-backed embossed layer is quite thin.





## Embossed materials

including Lincrusta-Walton and compo (composite) ornament decorate frieze bands, borders, and entire walls in main rooms. Ceilings and friezes are further decorated with glazes and painted stenciling.







**ABOVE** The dining table, with formal upholstered chairs, sits under another impressive shower (multi-pendant) fixture. **BELOW** (from left) Clad in marble with colorful mosaic-tile floors, the upstairs bath has a deep pedestal tub and a needle shower that still works. • The five-pendant shower fixture is suspended from an elaborate, cast-metal ring of fruit. • The double wall sconce with a hobnail glass shade is in an upstairs bedroom.





## Before this Catskills town

was a ski resort, it was a weekend destination for well-to-do New Yorkers who built grand “cottages” in styles from rustic to Neoclassical Revival. By the late 1930s, many of those weekenders were no longer wealthy. That was when Brooklyn textile-mill owner Jack Rogers came into possession of the house with the flamboyant Beaux Arts interior. His granddaughter would later christen it Clovesend.

For years, Jack’s wife and daughter would trek up to Hunter for the summer. They’d spend the week doing laundry, making up beds, and preparing food for the many guests on both sides of the family who would descend on the weekend. “For my mother, it was like summer vacation,” says Kerrul Kassel, Jack’s granddaughter. Kassel (her first name is pronounced “Carol”) came into sole possession of the house as a young woman. Except for upstairs rooms done over in the 1950s or ’60s, “very little has changed. The stenciled ceilings, all of the mouldings and trim, and the wall coverings were there as long as I’ve known the house.”

While Kassel does not know when Clovesend was built, the Beaux Arts style became popular in the 1890s and ended with the Wall Street crash of 1929. Kassel sees the interior as transitional, so she pins the build date to the Teens or early Twenties. As a child, she remembers being delighted and intrigued with the stained-

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glass windows and chandeliers that appeared to be carefully matched to the medallions and raised enrichments mounted above them: “I’m one who loves ornamentation. Sometimes I think I should have been born 100 years ago. Even the fashions of the time would have suited my figure.”

The extraordinary craftsmanship may be the work of Italian immigrants who brought knowledge of ornamental plaster and faux finishes to the Catskills. The fine decorative painting on the ceilings is stenciled, not painted freehand. Plaster molds remain in the attic, along with scraps of the embossed Lin-crusta that covers the walls of the stairwell.

Household furnishings mostly date to Kassel’s grandparents’ tenure. Both her mother and grandmother were antiques collectors and dealers. Kassel learned to play the 1880s pump organ in the front parlor, which came from a piano store in Vermont.

The name Clovesend comes from the house’s position at the end of Stoney Clove, a passage through the mountains. A stone wall and gate in front of the house lead to a walkway

flanked by sugar maples. The spacing between trees gradually diminishes the closer they are to the gate, giving the illusion of greater distance when viewed from the porch.

The grounds include a stone terrace in the back leading to a guest house called Cherry Hill, with a squash court, chicken coop, and two other guest houses beyond that. In the years Kassel’s grandmother summered here, she had a gardener to whom she gave *carte blanche*. His green thumb created formal gardens on axial plans with carefully manicured conifers along with apple, cherry, and pear trees. Blackberries and wild thyme thrived on the hillside. Flower beds surrounding the patio overflowed with pansies.

Kassel lived in the house full time for a couple of years, then left to complete a PhD. She now runs a leadership-training foundation in Florida that involves interacting with horses. (A common exercise: leading a horse without reins or a lead through an obstacle course. It’s tougher than it sounds.)

In recent years, living 1200 miles away and dealing with family health issues put a strain on her ability to maintain or even to visit Clovesend. “My grandmother had a saying, ‘the mountain got too high’. The mountain got too high for me, too.”

She sold Clovesend earlier this year to a buyer she hopes will leave the house intact. “From clothes in the drawers to sheets on the beds, even the silverware, it’s all still there.”





# WHAT IS AVAXHOME?



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# BEAUX ARTS LIGHTING AND BEYOND

SHAPES, COLORS, AND FANTASY EXPLODED IN THE TEENS AND TWENTIES. By Mary Ellen Polson

From single-bulb pendants to cast-metal confections adorned with hand-painted glass, lighting in the early years of electricity was all about invention. Beaux Arts lighting was on the high side of the style equation. Thanks to Edison and the electric light bulb, these new fixtures could direct light up or down or sideways. Easy-to-cast alloys led to incredibly ornate fixtures with intricate detail. Shades also evolved in shape, color, and translucency—and not only in glass. From silk to sheepskin, fabric was employed to screen fixtures with upright bulbs, from “candlestick” sconces with faux wax drips to cast chandeliers with multiple arms.

Tiffany-style art glass fixtures gave way to art-glass bowl and pendant fixtures and more affordable polychromed fixtures made from inexpensive pot metals. Brightened with thin paint coatings, relief was picked out in a lighter color such as gold against coppery bronze. Hand-painted shades in opaque or opalescent glass brought pops of color to fixtures, incidentally adding color to the light cast.

As with other fixtures of the times, favorite Beaux Arts forms included pan lights, shower (multi-pendant) fixtures, and hanging (inverted) bowls. The pan light is a decorative plate mounted or suspended by chains from the ceiling, with bulbs facing up or down. Truly extravagant examples were suspended on chains that reached a ring encrusted with ornamentation, with bulbs dangling below.

Shower fixtures, where multiple shaded pendants are suspended by chains from a ceiling plate, were especially



Old California's Arden variant is a ceiling-mounted pan light with art-glass shades.

## SOURCES

- BEAUTIFUL OLD LIGHTS [etsy.com/shop/BeautifulOldLights](https://etsy.com/shop/BeautifulOldLights)
- BRASS LIGHT GALLERY [brasslight.com](https://brasslight.com)
- GREAT OLD LIGHTS [etsy.com/shop/GreatOldLights](https://etsy.com/shop/GreatOldLights)
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popular and showy. They were versatile, too: with the standardization of the bulb fitter, a shower fixture could be fitted with simple opalescent shades, fluted or bell-shape opaque shades, painted shades, or lustrous art glass.

Hanging bowls suspended from chains are among the most graceful fixtures of the era. Made of translucent glass or, more rarely, alabaster, fixtures reflected light off the ceiling and also cast it softly downward. Hybrid bowl-and-shower fixtures have the bowl encircled by suspended bulbs with shades, or by upright electric candles.

Many period styles are available in reproduction but it's rare to find a Beaux Arts reproduction. For high-style chandeliers and sconces with relief work, polychrome fixtures, and hand-painted glass, turn to the vintage market: Shop antique-lighting specialists, local and regional salvage dealers, flea markets, and online sources like Etsy or 1stDibs to discover an unexpected treasure.

**OPPOSITE, TOP ROW** (from left) The Arden is a classic shower fixture from Old California. Choosing different finishes and shades for the fixture dramatically changes the period style of the chandelier. • A hand-painted fixture from the 1920s was recently available at Beautiful Old Lights, at [etsy.com](https://etsy.com). • Meyda Lighting's Gothic, three-arm light is a combination inverted bowl with a trio of suspended bulbs with fringed, art-glass shades. **MIDDLE ROW** A double candle sconce with polychromed backplate from Great Old Lights on Etsy comes with the original 1920s candle sleeves. • The Labas sconce with a shell-shaped alabaster shade, from House of Antique Hardware, recalls 1920s theater lighting. • A cast, chain-hung Beaux Arts pan light with vintage shades from Great Old Lights dates to 1915. **BOTTOM ROW** A mirrored, double-armed sconce from Heritage Metalworks has realistic faux wax candles. • Inspired by exceptionally rare examples in early America, crystal pan lights in new modern shapes—like the Zelda from King's Chandelier—were popular in aspirational households of the 1920s. • This Art Nouveau-influenced sconce with a figural maiden, from Vintage Hardware & Lighting, features a tinted, etched shade.









## VICTORIAN QUEEN ANNE

Houses designed by the Knoxville architect George Barber typically are wildly asymmetrical and highly ornamented Queen Anne Revival confections. In red brick, this one displays a bit of New England restraint.

When the state of Vermont widened the road in front of the house, some of the front lawn was taken and a retaining wall added. **INSET** Extensions connect the house to the original barn.



# A Victorian *restored* IN VERMONT

A professional preservationist (and serial restorer) brings back this important Queen Anne, updating systems and even adding stencils based on original evidence.

By Regina Cole / photographs by Carolyn Bates

***“This is the only George Barber-designed house in Vermont,” says John Dumville about his red-brick, Queen Anne house.*** Built in 1895, it’s in South Royalton, a village in the center of the Green Mountain State. “Before I bought it, I knew nothing about George Barber.”

Dumville is not alone: although Knoxville-based Barber was one of the most successful residential architects of the late 19th century, his fame faded after his death, in 1915. Barber is best known for the house designs he marketed worldwide through mail-order catalogs: his house plans were used in all 50 states and in places as far away as Japan and the Philippines.

John Dumville knows more about historic houses than most—before he retired, he served as Historic Sites Operations Chief for the State of Vermont. For many years, he lived in and restored a large Federal house, also in South Royalton. Then a health challenge left him unable to climb stairs.







## NOOKS AND CRANNIES

The front parlor wraps around the massive chimney and a projecting bay. Fireplaces originally surrounded coal-burning fixtures, which were common in 1895. Woodwork in the house is mostly fir, never painted, as well as oak.



**TOP** Painted deep red, the parlor has new stenciling that echoes fragments of original work found during restoration.

**LEFT** The parlor is an irregularly shaped room, a hallmark of asymmetrical Queen Anne houses.

An alcove holds Eastlake furniture, an inherited lamp, and local artwork. **RIGHT** A smaller room at the front of the house, used as a home office, has a beaded-board ceiling, walls papered in a soft floral, and louvered shutters.





## Old-House Living REDUX

John Dumville earlier appeared in a cover story in *Old-House Journal*, in the August 1999 issue, as owner of the Denison House, an 1805 Federal manse in Royalton, Vermont. The village's collection of historic homes, including the Denison House and the George Barber house he owns now, is a reason he is happy to live here. • Dumville credits the Denison family for one of his collecting passions. As generations were embroiled in a two-decade legal dispute to settle the estate, Denison family heirlooms were auctioned off on the lawn, an event recorded by *Vermont Life* magazine in 1949. One item was a clock made in Royalton; when it surfaced many years later at a Christie's auction, Dumville felt compelled to buy it. It's one of three pre-1840s Vermont clocks on display in this house.







**ABOVE** Designed by George Barber and erected by an unknown local builder, the Victorian Queen Anne has classic hallmarks of the style, including irregular massing, a tower, a complex roof, decorative bargeboards at eaves, multiple porches, and bays. **BELOW** Pocket doors separate the red front parlor from the tan sitting room where Civil War prints and a musket are display.

## ANNIVERSARY THROWBACK!



Well before Sears, architect George Barber sold full plans by mail. Perhaps the first popular account of his work appeared in *OH*, in a 1980 article by Patricia Poore referencing the accounts of readers who owned Barber houses.



This is a facsimile of an actual ad for Barber's pattern book, "The Cottage Souvenir", from about 1892. Design #37 from that book is shown on the front cover of this issue.







“Just as I was retiring and facing illness, this house became available. I wanted to stay in town ... and restoring this house gave me a project while encouraging me to focus on a future,” he says.

The 10-room house, just under 5,000 square feet, had, before Dumville, been owned by a family who, according to him, “had money, but they put none of it into the house.” By 2015, the roof leaked, the furnace was antiquated, and wood trim everywhere was rotting and falling off. Before he began work, Dumville spent two years learning about George Barber, studying this example, and planning how he could live in and use the house. He spent the next two years installing new wiring, a new roof, and a new high-efficiency furnace, connecting the heating system to the original steam radiators. Some rooms are now air-conditioned, insulation fills walls and ceilings,

original plaster and woodwork have been restored. Dumville took space from some bedrooms to create en-suite baths. For himself, he created an ADA-compliant bedroom suite on the main floor.

“Fortunately, none of the woodwork had ever been painted,” Dumville explains. “It is oak in the front hall and sitting room, fir everywhere else. The only big change that had ever been made was when the state widened the road in front of the house and took part of the lawn.”

While working on the interior, he found evidence of stenciling in the front parlor and called on Polly Forcier and Vivian Bisbee of MB Historic Décor in nearby Quechee, Vermont, to apply period-appropriate stencils to walls in that room and the dining room. He chose saturated red and green, colors that not only speak of a late-Victorian aesthetic but

also complement wood tones in the floors and woodwork. In other rooms, including the front hall, sitting room, bedrooms, and home office, he used a soft shade of tan, the original color he’d discovered under subsequent coats.

For furnishings, Dumville relied on pieces he already owned, including furniture inherited from his mother’s grandmother. He made space for his wooden clocks—“I focus on clocks made by Vermont clockmakers before the 1840s,” he says—as well as the Civil War musket inherited from his great-great uncle.

Although he insists that restoration is “never done,” John Dumville has settled into his newest old house. Even better, his health problems have been resolved: that downstairs bedroom, once a necessity, is now a convenience.

**ABOVE** Dining-room walls are painted green to harmonize with the red-tone fir woodwork. Grapevine stenciling echoes original work found under layers of paint.

**BELOW** Built-ins are true period pieces. Beside the recessed china cabinet is one of the owner’s tall-case clocks.





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# VICTORIAN STENCILED FRIEZES

MOTHER & DAUGHTER STENCILING SECRETS By Polly Forcier

➔ At John Dumville's 1895 Barber-designed house in Vermont, the Victorian-era walls are appropriately painted in luscious, deep colors. (See the previous story.) Ceilings are very high. Even a large ladder, spread wide for stability, puts the climbing painter at a considerable distance from the top of the wall. A tall person has an advantage.

Thus was the situation when Vivian Bisbee, the owner of MB Historic Décor, using her customary brush, twisted and stretched her way, reaching to work the paint into the Victorian stencil the homeowner, a retired historian, had chosen.

Two coats of the metallic paints were needed to cover the vivid red background. This was accomplished by hitting the first coat with a hair dryer while the stencil was still in place and then applying a second coat right over the first.

Gold metallic paint brings out the honey-toned woodwork, and white pearl-painted garlands appear as silver. Green flowers, topped with an iridescent second

coat, bring a stunning finale. That green color ties into the complementary walls of the dining room just beyond the double-door opening, which I stenciled many years ago in a wisteria-vine motif. I'm the founder of MB Historic Décor and mother of Vivian Bisbee.

Yes, the torch has been passed. I worked as Viv's assistant here, handing paints and other supplies overhead, allowing Vivian to work undisturbed until the ladder had to be moved. Oh but there must be an easier way, you say? Yes, there is, and we can divulge our secret:

Viv, being the next generation, has discovered that a foam roller works faster and cleaner than a stencil brush, saving time and money. The switch was especially necessary in these high-ceilinged rooms. The roller used is 2" dense foam. "I learned the trick from a maker of painted canvas floorcloths," Viv says. Her mom is reluctant to give up the authenticity of stenciling with brushes, but time moves on. [mbhistoricdecor.com](http://mbhistoricdecor.com)

**ABOVE & RIGHT** Cut stencils are registered on the wall to create the multi-color finish. Eventually, a foam roller was subbed in for the traditional stencil brush.



CAROLYN BATES; OHJ ARCHIVES (TOP RIGHT)





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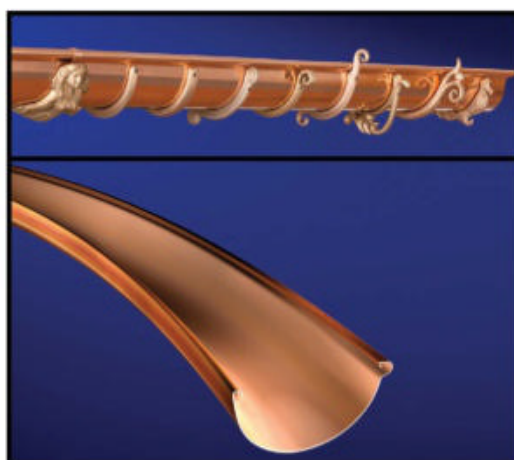
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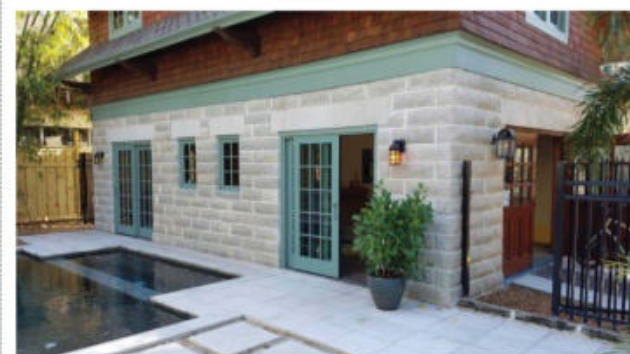
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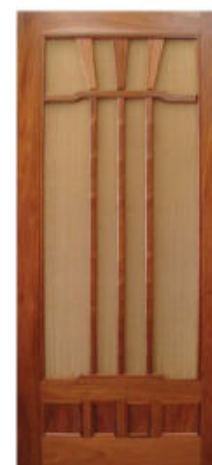
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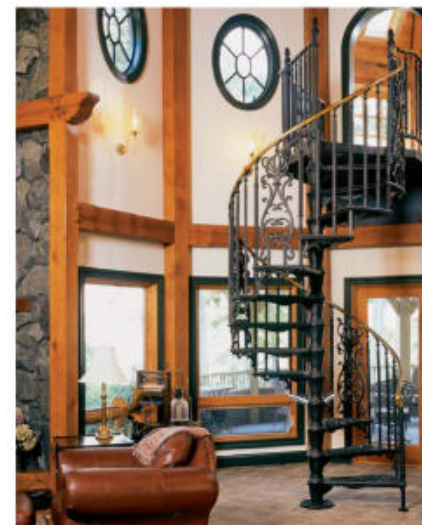
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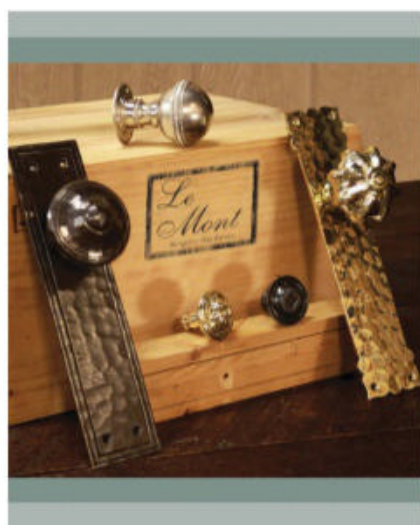
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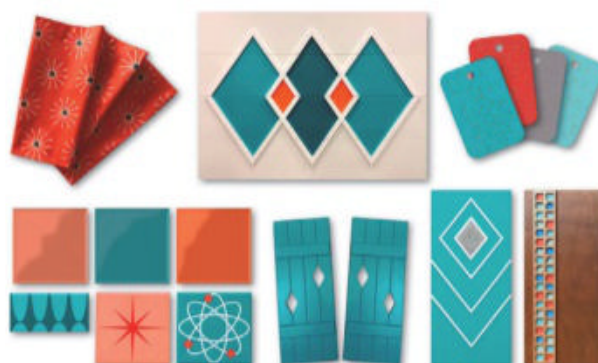
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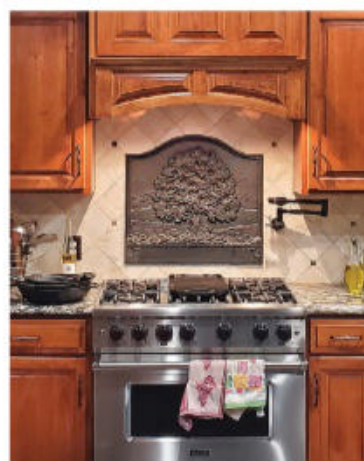
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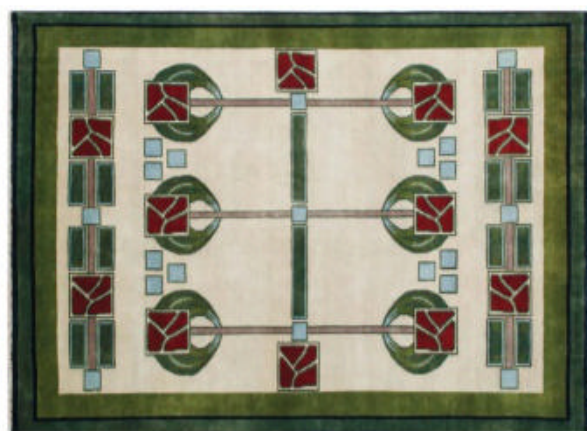
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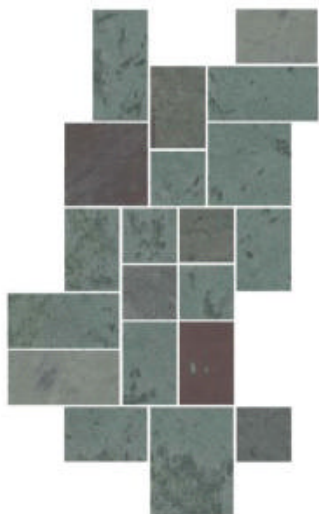
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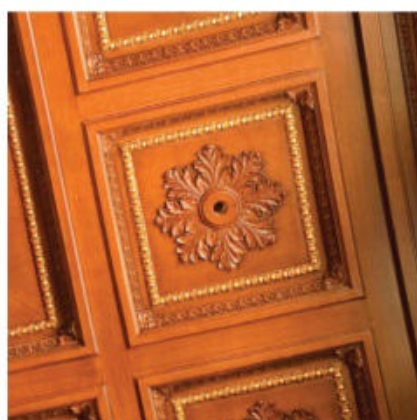
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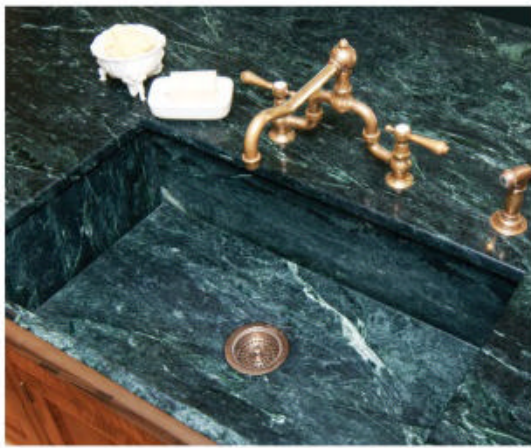
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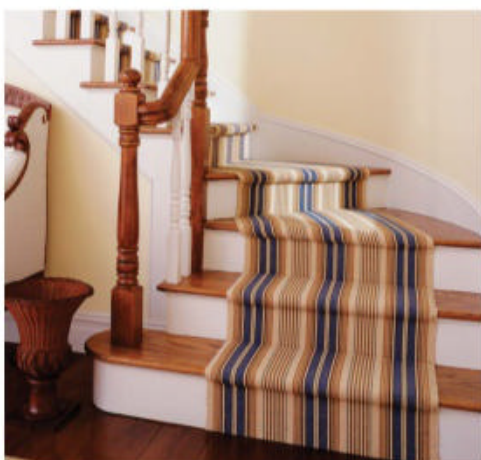
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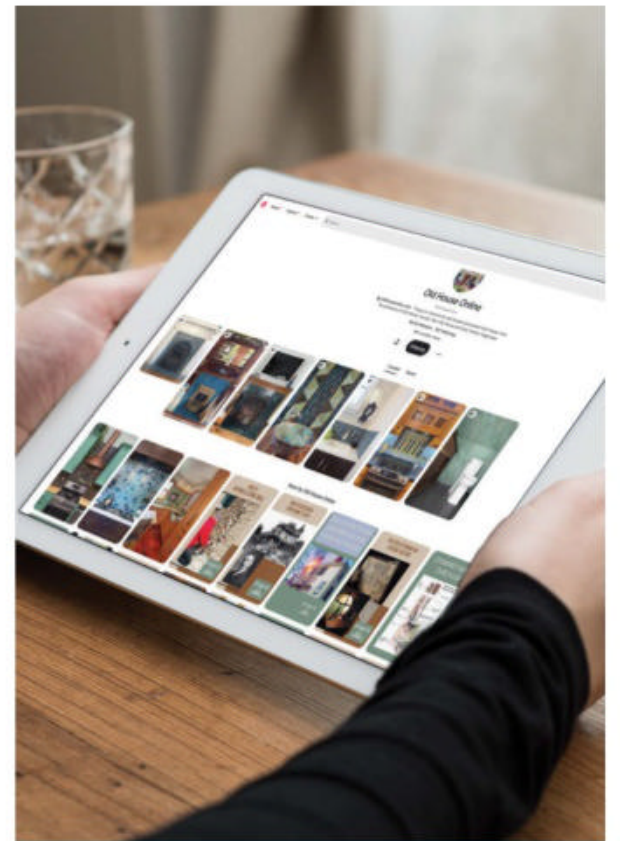
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## Resources

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**WINDOWS** Auralast (wood) from **JELD-WEN** jeld-wen.com  
**FLOORING** luxury vinyl plank **Cali Saddlewood** calibamboo.com  
**DECKING** **Fiberon** fiberondecking.com  
**FURNITURE** (similar) **Design Within Reach** dwr.com  
**Hive** hive.com  
**TILES** (powder rm.) 12" x 24" **American Noir** black-veined porcelain flooring tile

### DESIGN FAVORITES

**p. 29 WALLPAPER/FABRICS** **Morris & Co.** morrisandco.sandersondesigngroup.com  
**p.30 FURNITURE** (top left) **Stickley** stickley.com **DESIGNER** (top right) **Deborah Mariotti** mariottistudio.com **CHANDELIER** 'Heracleum' **Mooodi** mooodi.com  
**BOOK** (btm. right) **House Colors** by Susan Herschman, Gibbs Smith  
**p. 31 ARCHITECT** (btm. left.) **PBDW Architects** pbdw.com  
**DESIGNER** (btm. ctr.) **Sadro Interior Design** sadrodesign.com  
**p. 32 BED** (similar) **Leonards New England** leonardsnewengland.com

### KITCHEN & PANTRY

**RESTORATION CONSULTANT** **Karla Pearlstein, Restoring History** restoringhistory.com  
**DESIGNER** **Matthew Roman, Roman Design** roman-design.com  
**GC** **Mike Edeen, Artisan Woodworks** artisanpdx.com  
**REPRO. LIGHTING** **Schoolhouse** schoolhouse.com  
**HARDWARE** **Shenandoah Antique Restoration Hardware** shenandoahrestoration.com • **Rejuvenation** rejuvenation.com  
**LADDER KIT** **CS Hardware** cshardware.com  
**SUBWAY TILE** **Daltile** daltile.com

### BOW WINDOWS

**Related Resources**  
**SLUMPED GLASS** **Allied Window** alliedwindow.com  
*Nearly invisible storm panels incl. with slumped or bowed glass* See also: lucidglassstudio.com • curvedglasscreations.com

### WE TELL TALES

**p. 43** From **RUIN: Photographs of a Vanishing America** by Brian Vanden Brink, Down East Books, 2009  
**p. 46 INT. PAINT** **Georgian Green HC-115 Benjamin Moore** benjaminmoore.com  
**BOOK Arts & Crafts Houses Vol. 1** [Red House] by Edward Hollamby; Phaidon Press  
**CABINETS** **Kennebec Company** kennebeccompany.com  
**PENDANT LANTERN** **David Berman, Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com  
**p. 49 BATH WALLPAPER** 'Squirrel & Vine' **Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com  
**ART TILE** **Carreaux du Nord** carreauxdunord.com

**SINK** **Petite Corner wall-hung Barclay** barclayproducts.com  
**TOILET** **MALIBU II ICERA** icerabath.com  
**MEDICINE CABINET** **Golden Oak corner cabinet 14338 Renovator's Supply** rensup.com  
**FLOOR TILE** **Maravilla Caribbean Green Hexagon Mosaics** **Flour & Décor** flooranddecor.com  
**FAUCET** **Portwood by Delta** deltafaucet.com  
**HARDWARE** (hinges) **Reliabilt 1/4-in. Overlay 200-Degree Opening in Satin Nickel • (pulls)** Amerock 253G10 **Everyday Heritage Allison in Satin Nickel Lowe's** lowes.com  
**KITCHEN FLOOR** **Marmoleum in Seashell** **Forbo** forboflooringna.com  
**PAINT** (bath) **Green Wave 681, (kit. cabinets)** **Palm Trees 642, (kit. wall & trim)** **Picket Fence CSP-370 Benjamin Moore** benjaminmoore.com  
**p. 50 LIGHTING** **Fed-On Lights Antiques** fedonlights.com **ART GLASS** **Kokomo Opalescent Glass** kog.com

**KNOW-HOW STORING ENERGY**  
**Briggs & Stratton** simpliphpower.com  
**LFP battery storage & whole-house backup** **Ecoflow** ecoflow.com  
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### Related Resources

**Allied Window** alliedwindow.com  
**Storm-window panels** **Innerglass Window Systems** stormwindows.com  
*Interior storm windows* **Unico System** unicosystem.com  
*Small-duct air conditioning*

### SALVAGE IT

**Related Resources**  
**Classic Gutter Systems** classicgutters.com  
*Half-round copper & aluminum gutters*  
**Sheldon Slate** sheldonslate.com  
*Slate roofing*

### A NEST TO FEATHER

**p. 76 TILE REPLICATION** **North Prairie Tileworks** handmadetile.com  
**PARLOR WALLPAPER** 'Golden Lily' **Morris & Co.** morrisandco.sandersondesigngroup.com  
**PARLOR CARPET** 'Sphinx' by **Old World Weavers** scalamandre.com/brands/old-world-weavers.html  
**SOFA** **Lillian August** lillianaugust.com  
**p.77 PAINT** **Sherwin-Williams** sherwin-williams.com  
**Benjamin Moore** benjaminmoore.com  
**STORM WINDOWS** **Marvin** marvin.com  
**p. 78 WALLPAPER** (stairwell) 'Tiger and Crane' with 'Herter Frieze' **Bradbury & Bradbury** bradbury.com • (music rm.) 'Aldworth' **Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com • (DR) 'Passion Flower' **Bradbury & Bradbury**

bradbury.com  
**MANTEL, BOOKCASE, DESK, CHAIR** **Gallenburg Studios** gallenbergstudio.com  
**p. 81 FLOORING** **Marmoleum by Forbo** forboflooringna.com  
**STOVE** **Aga** agarangeusa.com  
**WALLPAPER** 'Woodland Carpet Minor' **Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com  
**p. 82 (hall) WALLPAPER** 'Huntsman' **Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com  
**CLAWFOOT TUB** **American Standard** americanstandard-us.com  
**WALLPAPER** 'Augustine' **Thibaut** thibautdesign.com

### A DECORATED INTERIOR

#### Related Resources

**Decorators Supply** decoratorssupply.com  
*Venerable producer of plaster, compo, wood ornament & architectural details*  
**Lincrusta** lincrusta.com  
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**Plaster Magic** plastermagic.com  
*Plaster repair adhesives & conditioners; kits*  
**J P Weaver Co.** jpweaver.com  
*Architectural mouldings/ornaments & Petitsin® flexible mouldings*

### LIGHTING TEENS/TWENTIES

**Beautiful Old Lights** etsy.com/shop/BeautifulOldLights  
**Brass Light Gallery** brasslight.com  
**Great Old Lights** etsy.com/shop/GreatOldLights  
**Heritage Metalworks** hmwpa.com  
*House of Antique Hardware* houseofantiquehardware.com  
**King's Chandelier** chandelier.com  
**Meyda Lighting** meyda.com  
**Old California Fine Lighting & Home Goods** oldcalifornia.com  
**Vintage Hardware & Lighting** vintagehardware.com

### Related Resources

**Bevolo** bevolo.com  
*Handcrafted copper gas & electric lanterns*  
**Sundial Wire** sundialwire.com  
*Vintage-look cloth-covered wire; lighting & electrical components*

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**PLASTER RESTORATION** **Jeff Corbett, Emerald Isle Construction**, Randolph, VT: (802) 728-9565  
**BRICK WORK** **Damon Straw, DS Masonry**, Poultney, VT: (802) 287-5139  
**HEAT PUMPS** **ARC Mechanical**, Bradford, VT: archmech.com  
**ROOFERS** **Ted and Cody Hatch, TH Roofing**, Chelsea, VT: (802) 685-4694



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**Vivian Bisbee & Polly Forcier, MB Historic Decor**, Quechee, VT: mbhistoricdecor.com  
*Also sell stencils, specialty paints, wall-restoration products*  
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**ANTIQUES** **William Smith Auctions**, Plainfield, NH: wsmithauction.com • **Duane Merrill Auctions**, Williston, VT: merrillsauction.com  
**LANDSCAPE** **EC Brown's Nursery**, East Thetford, VT: ecbransnursery.biz

### Related Resources

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*Hand-block-printed historical wallpapers & borders 1750-1930*  
**Bassett & Vollum** bassettandvollum.com  
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**Thomas Strahan** thomasstrahan.com  
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**Trustworth Studios** trustworth.com  
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“... poor houses have lost their character.”  
— Elaine Scheller



## BROKEN RHYTHM

Our reader Mr. Roberts, an associate professor of architecture at MassArt, has been a fan of the Remuddling feature since our newsletter days. He photographed this peculiar example in Brookline, Mass., an early streetcar suburb just three and a half miles from downtown Boston. The row was designed ca. 1890 as three side-by-side dwelling units. Over the years, the buildings have been further subdivided to become a half dozen mixed-use condo units, with various owners practicing their “divergent views of façade aesthetics,” as he puts it.

As it turns out, Frederick Law Olmsted, the renowned landscape architect, was contracted by Brookline, in the 1920s, to develop an urban plan for the town’s major thoroughfare. As was its practice, the Olmsted office took hundreds of photos, which they labeled and archived. Mr. Roberts came across the 1921 photo in the Olmsted Historic Site archives. It shows that the original Victorian row—separate yet attached houses created as a unit, complex and varied from the start—was designed with integrity. So unlike the hodge-podge we see today.



An integrated design created visual interest with varied yet related façade treatments, along with good proportion and rhythm.

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