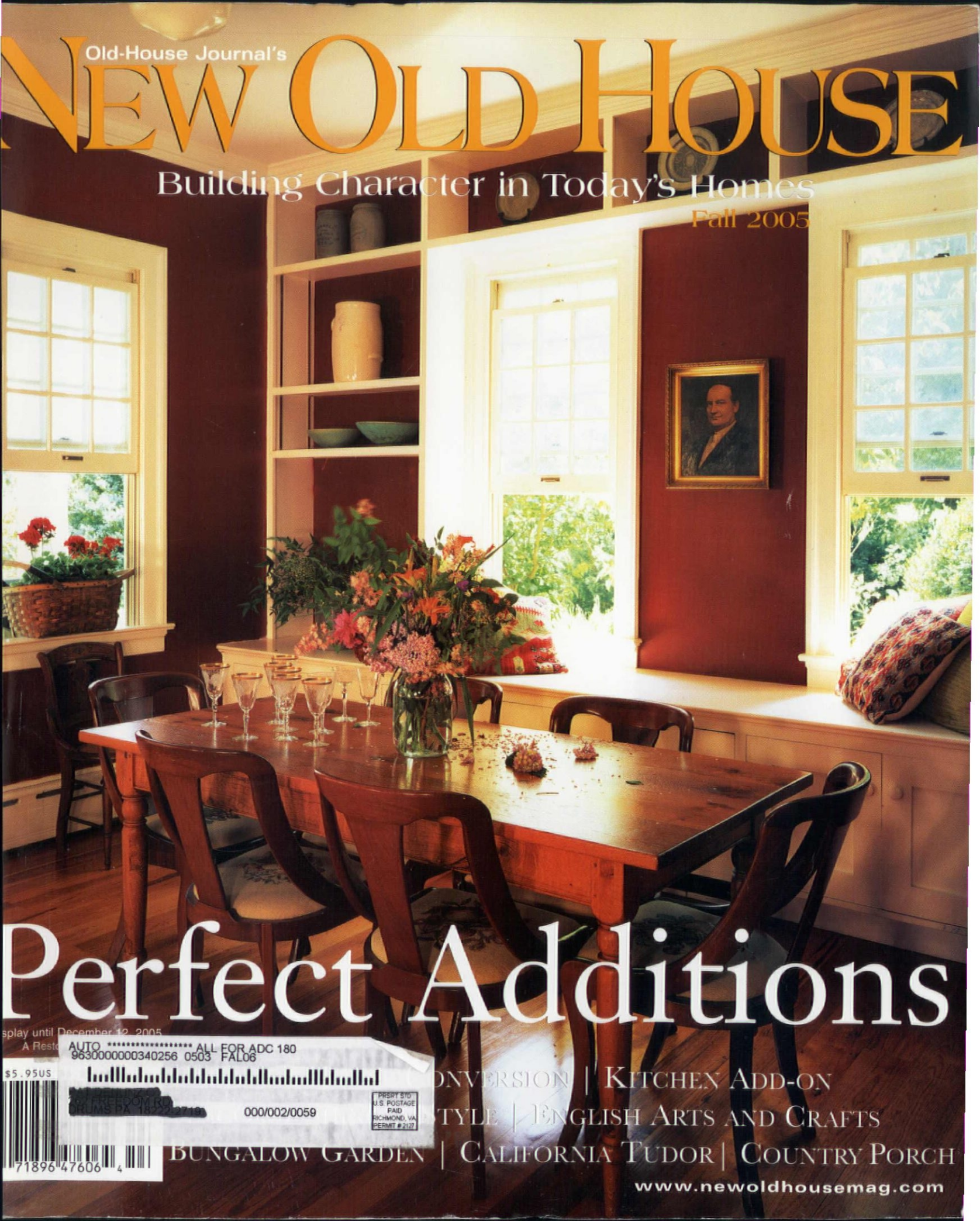

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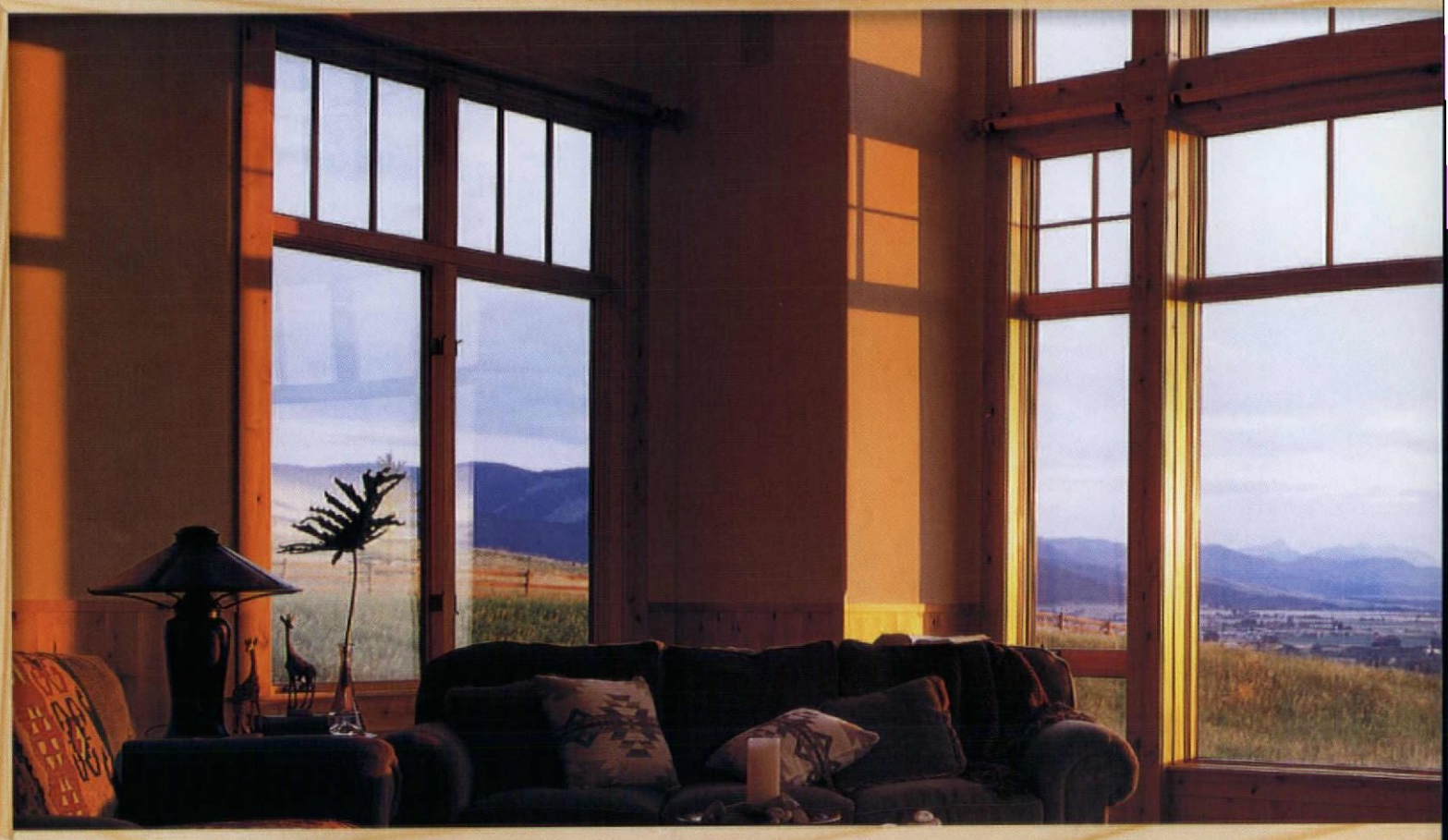

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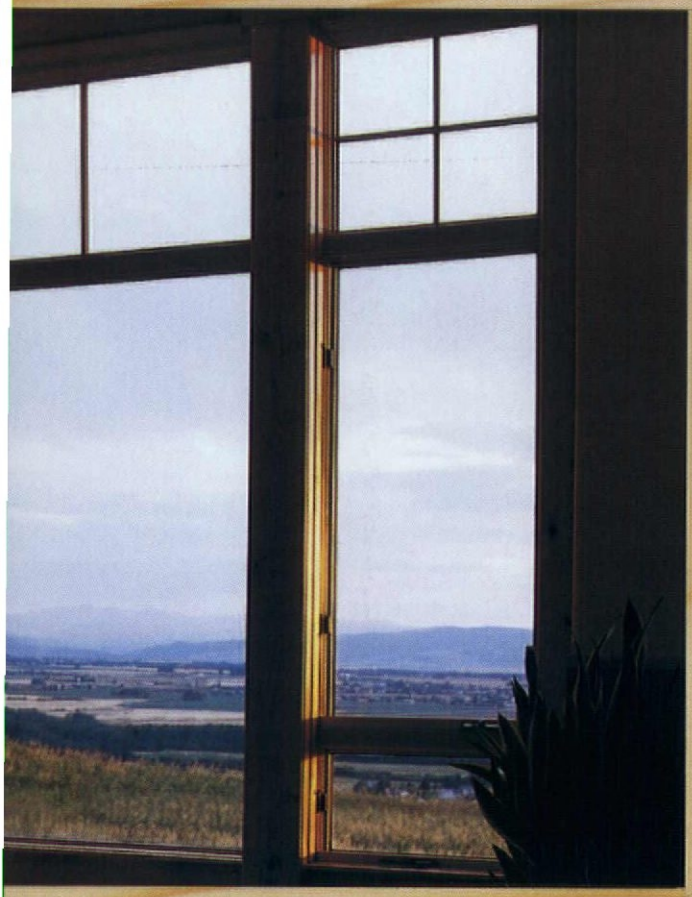

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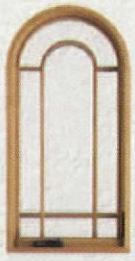

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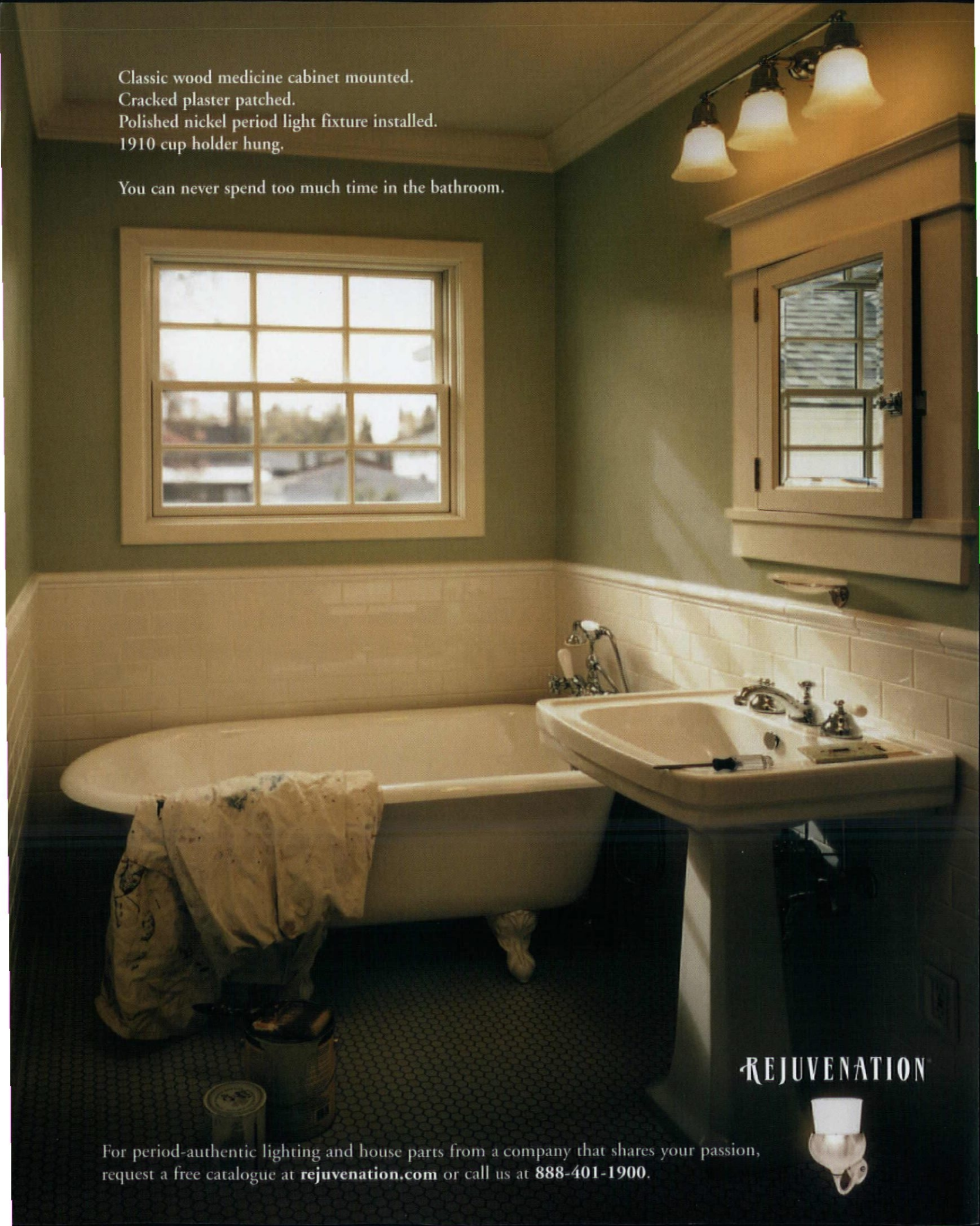
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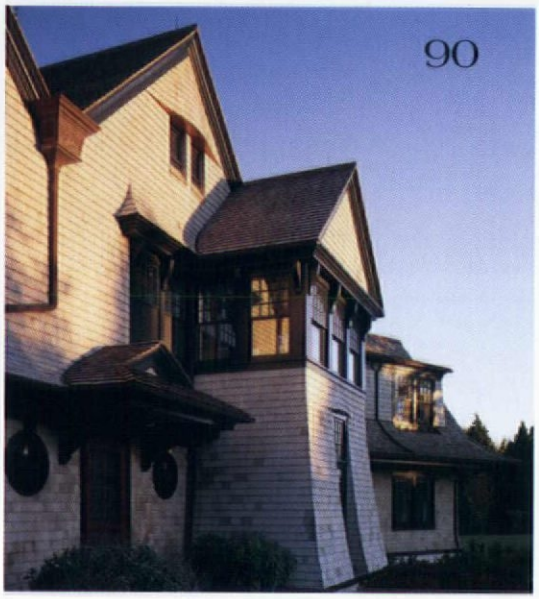




Contents

50 Tudor Revival, Hollywood Style

By Lynn Morgan
Architect Richard Landry re-creates the drama of this 1931 English Tudor while maintaining the original structure's integrity.

60 Old House Add-on

By Michael Tardif
Architectural firm Franck Lohsen McCrery designs a sensitive addition to an ancient dwelling in Alexandria, Virginia.

70 Updating a Classic

By Nancy E. Berry
Architect John B. Murray designs a serene kitchen reminiscent of the past in a New York City apartment.

76 English Arts and Crafts

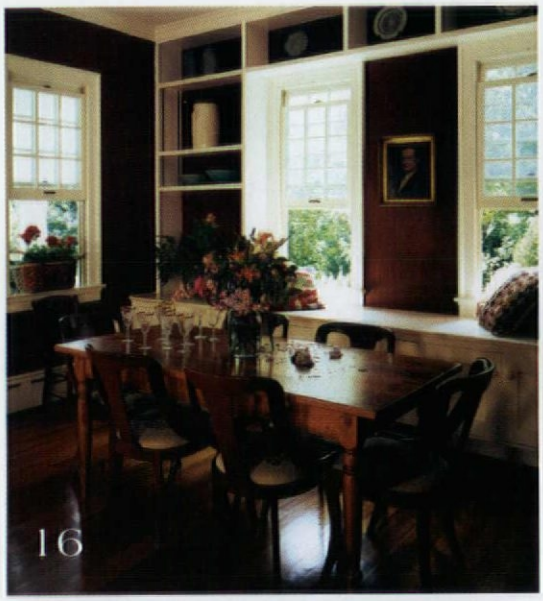
By J. Robert Ostergaard
Sandra Vitzthum designs a new old house befitting her client's extensive antiques collection.

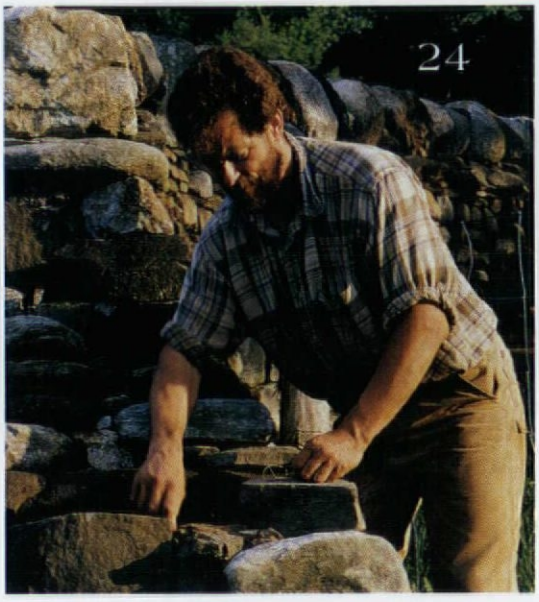
86 Bedroom Built-in

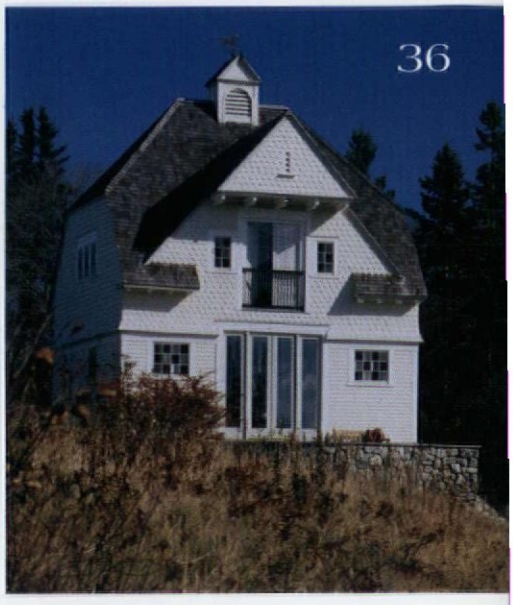
By Elizabeth Downey
Four new old house designers create extra storage space under the eaves.

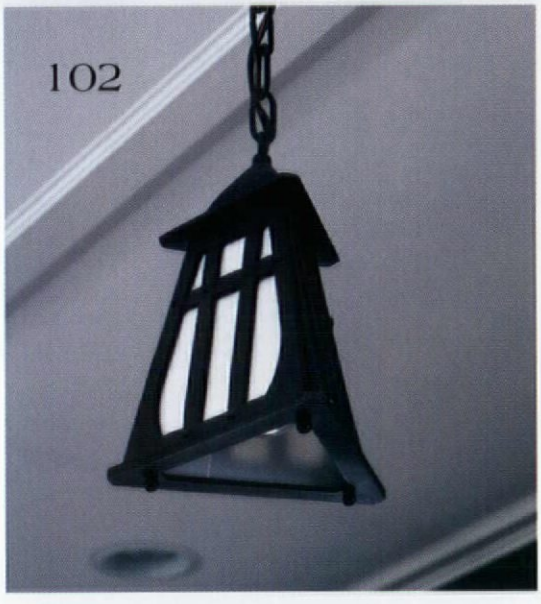
90 An American Original

By Bethany Lyttle
Inspired by the great Shingle-style homes of the early twentieth century, Shope Reno Wharton Architecture designs a grand home on Rhode Island's coast.









Cover Photo by Nancy Easter White
Frazier Associates designed this dining room addition in an old brick farmhouse in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. The design complements the original structure perfectly.

Contents

8 Editor's Page

12 Architects' Principles

By Russell Versaci
How to create authenticity in a new old house.

16 Drafting Board

By Logan Ward
Frazier Associates creates a new open-air porch for this old house in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

24 Traditional Trades

By April Paffrath
The ancient art of dry stone walling creates the perfect hardscaping for traditional homes.

30 Design Details

By Elizabeth Downey
Artist Molly Plaster revives the colonial art of stenciling to dress new old house floors.

36 Outbuildings

By Nancy E. Berry
An 1889 carriage house is re-created into a three-season cottage retreat.

44 Heirloom Gardens

By Michael Weishan
Lessons on how to create an inviting bungalow garden.

102 Resources

The products, materials, craftspeople, designers, architects, and landscape designers who bring these buildings to life.

118 Historical House Plans

Historically inspired home plans.

138 Building Blocks

By Christine G. H. Franck
American Georgian.



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A Sensitive Subject



For architects and preservationists, adding on to historic structures has been a controversial topic for more than a century. Do you create a design that blends in with the old structure, or do you make a clear distinction between past and present? The Technical Preservation Services division of the National Park Service (NPS) developed guidelines to answer such questions. The guidelines state that an addition to a historical building should "preserve significant historic materials and features, preserve the historic character, and protect the historical significance by making a visual distinction between old and new."

While many can agree with the first two points, the third is one that often comes into question. Because this recommendation is open to interpretation, some architects have taken it to the extreme, building awkward modern appendages on to old structures for the sake of "distinction." Although many of our homes are not under the scrutiny of NPS, it's still a topic that traditional residential architects wrestle with.

In this issue, we visit projects that have successfully solved the issue of adding on to an old house. Preservation architect Kathy Frazier of Frazier Associates designed a new porch befitting its 1810 Federal brick farmhouse (page 16). While clearly a modern-day addition with its expanse of French doors and windows, the porch addition blends with the character of the old building harmoniously.

Franck Lohsen McCrery Architects "designed new to preserve the old." They created a kitchen addition to one of the oldest houses in Alexandria, Virginia—leaving the original circa 1770 kitchen intact (page 60). The architects took careful steps to ensure that all the new work was reversible and that no damage was done to the original structure. The result is a new kitchen that plays off the old structure seamlessly. These projects remind us that with some thoughtful planning, traditional design can save the character of an old house as well as enhance it for today's lifestyles.

Nancy E. Berry
Editor

This fall *Old-House Journal's New Old House* celebrates its first anniversary, and we'd love to hear from you about what you like and what you would like to see more of in the magazine. Please send your comments to *OHJ's New Old House*, Letters to the Editor, 1000 Potomac Street, NW, Suite 102, Washington, DC 20007.

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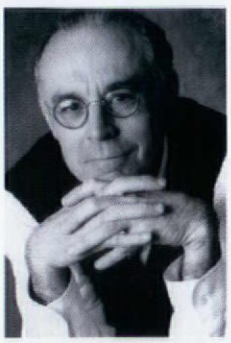

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Garden Editor **Michael Weishan** debuted as host of PBS's "The Victory Garden" in 2001 and has been sharing his design tips, expert advice, and trademark sense of humor with gardeners of all levels ever since. In addition to heading his own design firm, Michael Weishan & Associates, which specializes in historically based landscapes, he has written for numerous national magazines and periodicals and authored three books: *The New Traditional Garden*, *From a Victorian Garden*, and the *Victory Garden Gardening Guide*. A graduate of Harvard with honors in classics and romance languages, Weishan lives west of Boston in an 1852 farmhouse surrounded by three acres of gardens.

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Authenticity

What are the characteristics that make a truly traditional home?

TEXT BY RUSSELL VERSACI SKETCHES BY ANDREW LEWIS

When I travel around the countryside looking at houses, I often play a little game. I ask myself whether the house I am looking at seems authentic. The answer is a simple yes or no. Either it does or it doesn't. I call this quick quiz the "authenticity test."

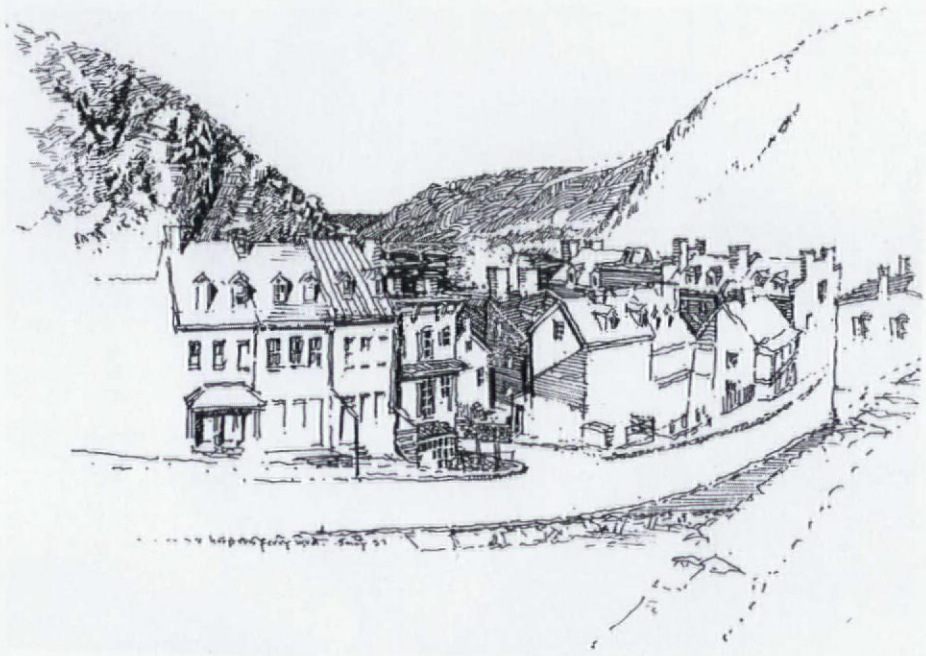
How do I decide at a glance whether a house is authentic? What makes one house real while another is not? What are the rules of the game?

I judge authenticity by a process of informed intuition, an instinct heavily colored by my knowledge of architecture. When I look at a house, I ask these questions: Do the composition and proportion look right? Are the details the correct size and shape? Is the house built of appropriate materials? Does it look well crafted and permanent? In an instant, I can decide whether the house passes or fails.

Most of the time, laymen come to the same judgment about the authenticity of a house as I do. We share a common sense for the rules in our ability to judge whether something is right or wrong.

Authenticity is a search for truths that convey respectability and the authority of convention. In architecture, it means that a building or a material or a technique is correct, convincing, and sanctioned by tradition. There are rules for the right ways to do things.

Today, authenticity in architecture is important to us because so much of what we see is not. Most houses fail the authenticity test. Ask people about today's new houses and they roll their eyes. It is our reaction to cookie-cutter houses packed into homogenized subdivisions and gated communities filled with overblown tract mansions.



In our concept of home, we seek the reassurance of tradition. A home should respect its surroundings, be built to last, be finely crafted, accommodate our needs, and assure us of its integrity. We want a house that has character and soul. We search for connections to feel part of a community, to belong in a place, to share in its distinctive personality. A house that is authentic fits in like a good neighbor. An ordinary box that could be anywhere is really nowhere at all.

Most of us are looking for reliable authority when designing our homes. We want rules for making good judgments to justify and confirm our home-building decisions. We want authenticity.

I design houses that pass the authenticity test. They are new old houses that adapt the best of tradition for modern living. To make them authentic, I follow guidelines I call the Pillars of Traditional Design—a set of principles for creating houses that look real because their design is sanctioned by time and tradition.

The Pillars are traditional architecture's "Boy Scouts' Honor," a code of good conduct. They help define what is correct and appropriate in the composition, proportion, and detailing of the parts of a home. They instruct us in the use of traditional materials, in the practice of time-tested construction techniques, and in the wisdom of fine craftsmanship. And they show us how to invent new strategies for amending tradition to meet contemporary needs.

Creating new old houses poses some questions: Can authenticity be innovated? Can new ways of building be considered authentic? For answers, we need only look at history.

Traditions evolve over time. A tradition begins when someone invents a



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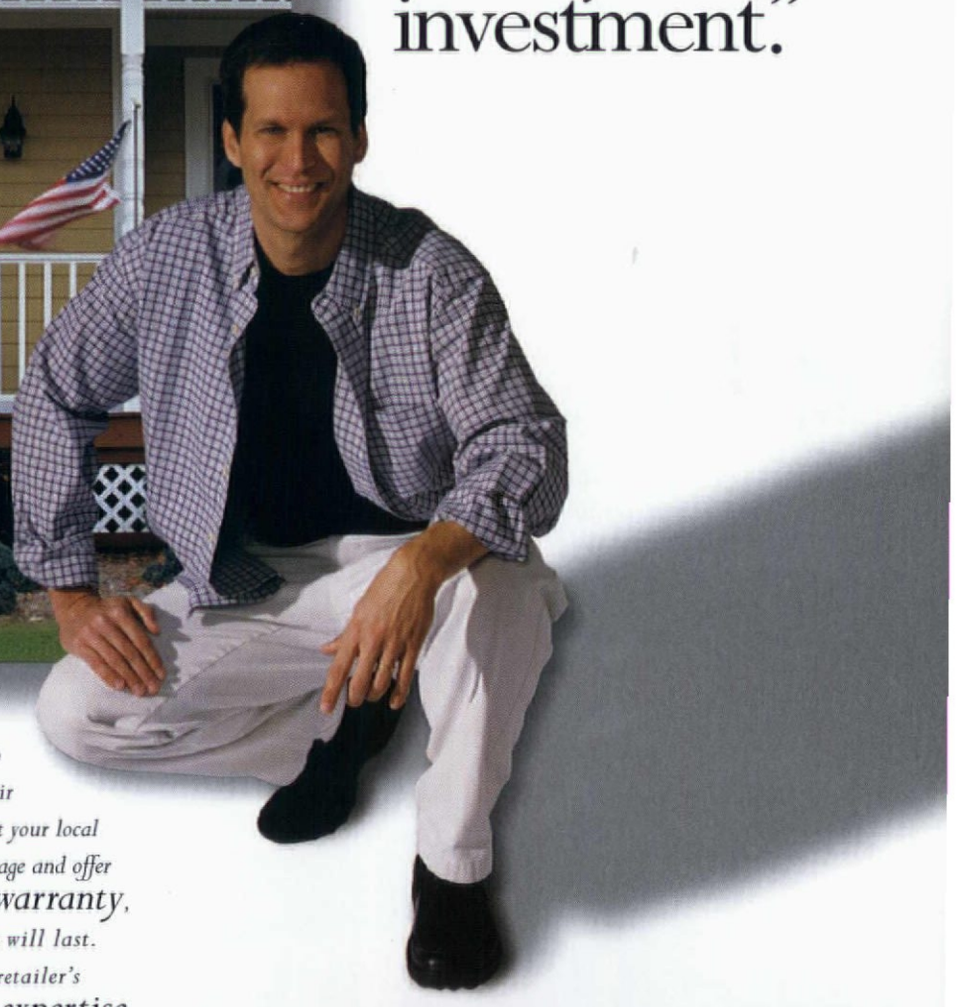

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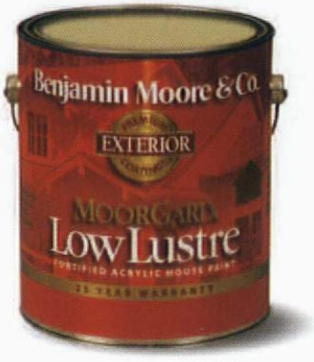

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solution to a building problem. Let's say you want to build a house in a new land. You take the measure of what the climate is like, how the land is shaped, and where you can find the best building materials close at hand. You create a house of logs or stone or adobe bricks that is well suited to local conditions. It serves as an example for others. Soon your neighbors adopt your home-building solution for their own house. When many people adopt the same design solution, a tradition is born.

In American home building, all of our traditional styles began with settlers who adapted their building skills to a new land. Traditions were born that we now call New England Colonial, Pennsylvania Dutch, Pueblo Adobe, or Spanish Mission, but these traditions were never static. They evolved as one builder improved on the solution of another: Over time, the shape of a roof changed to improve the way rain was diverted or to provide more shade, stone walls were coated with stucco to protect the mortar from the weather, clapboards were painted to preserve the wood from rot.

Traditions flex with time as innovations are incorporated into the definition of a style, and this process continues to the present day. When we create new old houses, we are constantly innovating. Traditions are adapted to current needs; new innovations in building systems, fabrication techniques, and material improvements are woven into the stream of tradition.

Creating new old houses is a process of innovation, a Pillar that I call Invent Within the Rules. Traditional architects push the margins of tradition to incorporate functional needs and technological improvements. They accommodate gourmet kitchens, family rooms, laundries, home offices, and private bathrooms into the planning of the interior layout, and they weave new systems for air-conditioning, smart wiring, and high-tech structural materials into the building framework. All of these changes alter the definition of a traditional house style.

Can a tradition that is constantly evolving be considered authentic? The answer is yes, because the core values are the same. Invention simply reconfigures what is already sanctioned by history to adapt it to contemporary needs.

History is full of innovations in the development of building materials. There are many examples that illustrate the process of integrating the new with the old. Let's consider the classical column. In early antiquity, the first rustic temples were post-and-beam structures made of wooden columns that supported square beams and roof rafters. The classical temples of Greece translated this wooden architecture and its decorative details into stone for permanence. During the Renaissance, architects made classical columns of plaster painted to imitate marble. Then in America, columns came full circle. Once again they were made of wood but painted with sand to mimic the texture of stone. And in our day, we manufacture columns with the correct classical proportions that are made of fiberglass.

Are these imitative materials authentic? They are as long as they pass the authenticity test. To get a passing grade, they must have three convincing features. First, they must be believable; that is, they must accurately reproduce the characteristic look of the original material. Second, they must be affordable, because there is no good reason to use a substitute material unless it offers a cost advantage. Third, they must be durable, offering an extended useful life and reduced maintenance cost over time.

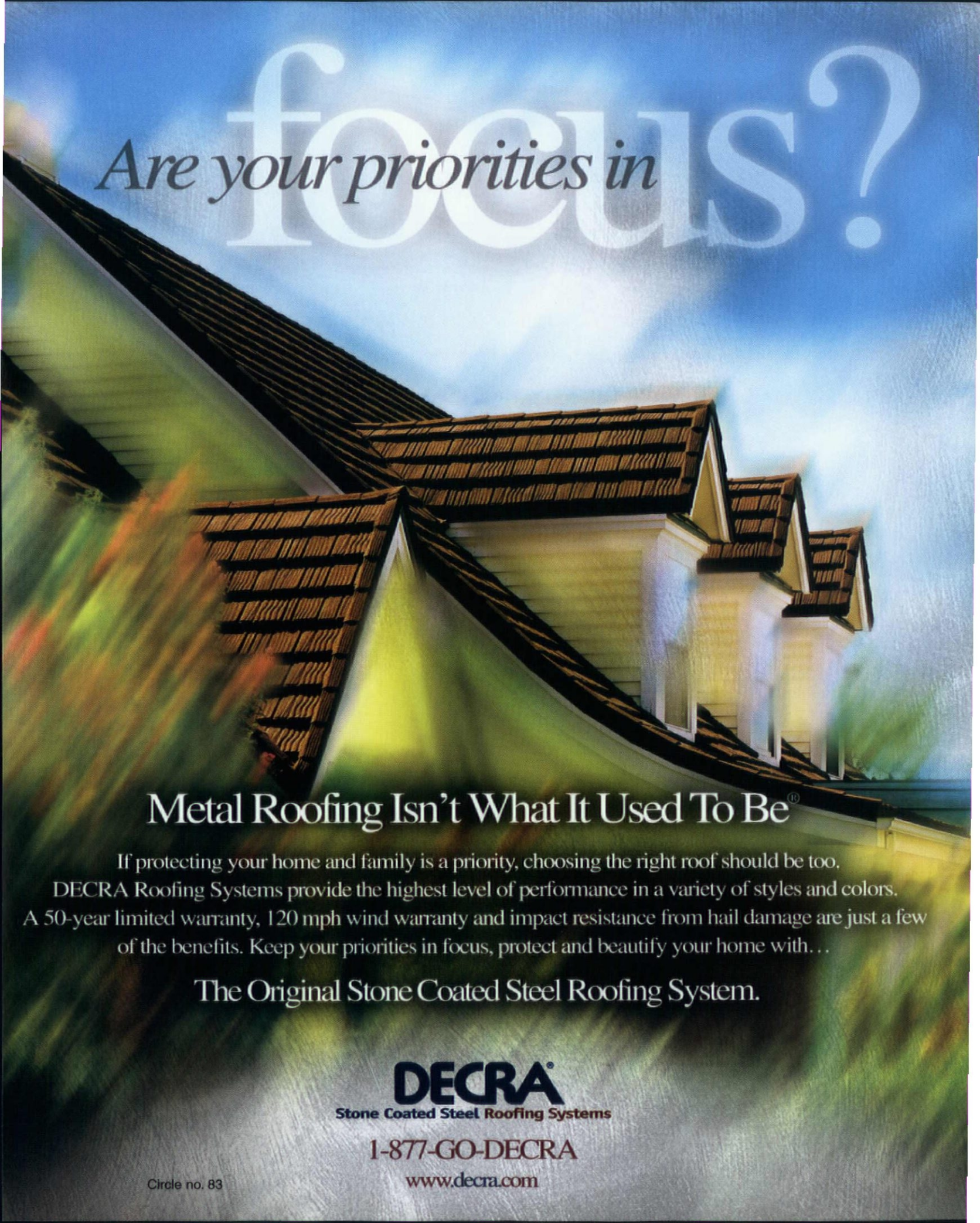
Today, inspired entrepreneurs are stretching the frontiers of traditional simulation materials, using science to create synthetics that are believable, affordable, and durable. These new materials allow us to render traditional styles in creative new ways, liberally sprinkling tradition with innovation.

Judging authenticity is not simple. Traditional conventions sanctioned over time create authority. We need rules in order to make appropriate decisions, but the rules must be malleable and subject to meaningful invention.

That's what makes creating new old houses so exciting. There is plenty of room for authentic originality. We can invent within the rules and extend the relevance of tradition for today. By constantly refining the definition of authenticity, we can propel the vitality of the past into the future—the creative essence of a new old house. NOH



Russell Versaci is author of Creating a New Old House *(Taunton Press 2003).*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Balancing Act

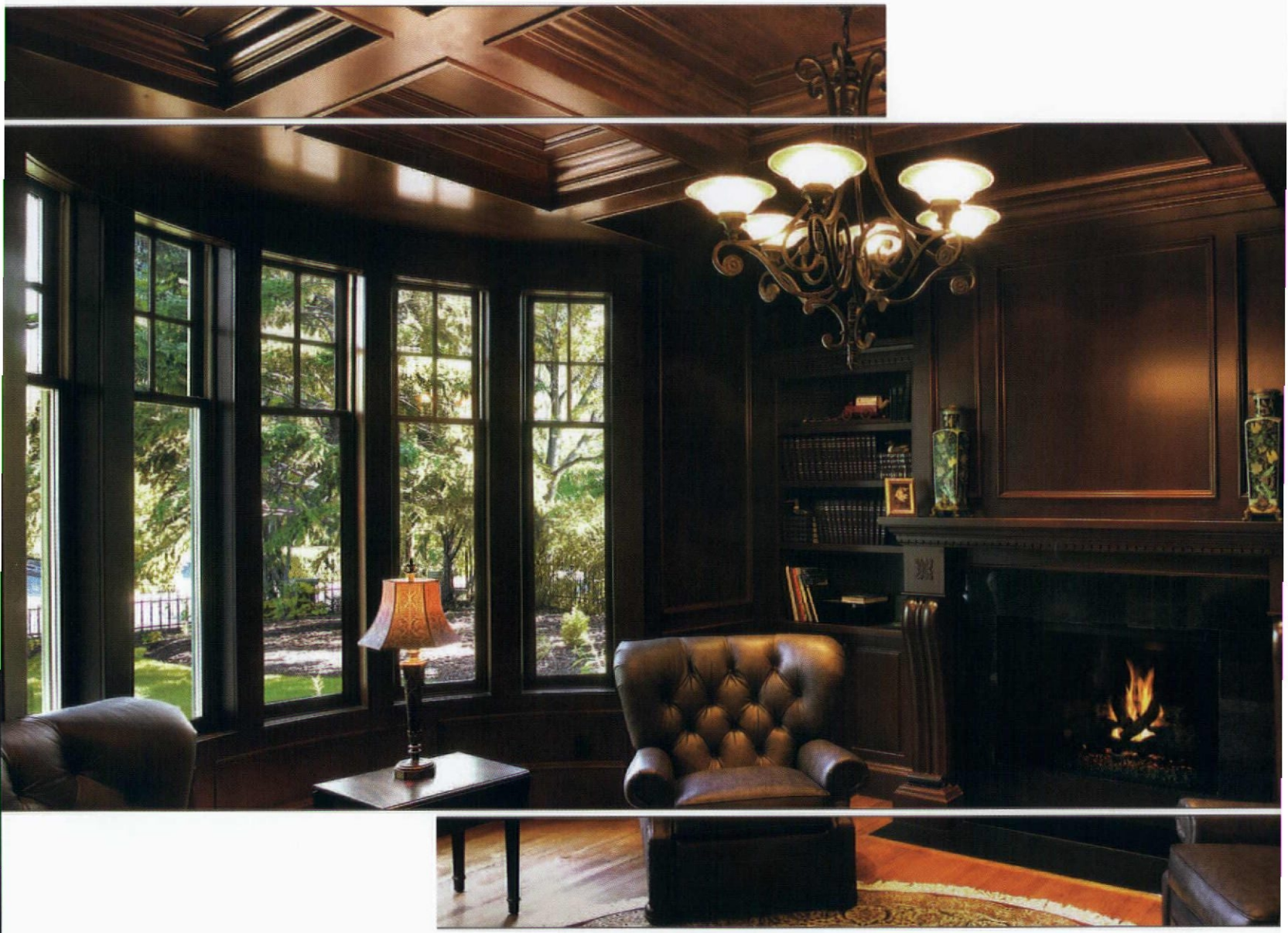
TEXT BY LOGAN WARD
PHOTOS BY NANCY EASTER WHITE

A porch addition to an 1810 Virginia Federal knits together new and old.



Frazier Associates blends old and new seamlessly in this porch addition on a nineteenth-century farmhouse in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley.

Motor through the rolling hills of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, and you will see them: two-story red-brick farmhouses with standing-seam metal roofs erected long before the automobile age, some even before the era of rail. Sturdy, symmetrical, built for the ages by plodding craftsmen, these homes—often rising amid the ruins of crude log cabins built by pioneering forebears—attest to the success of second- and third-generation Valley planters. Jefferson favored brick, writing that "a country whose buildings are of wood, can never increase in its improvements to any considerable degree." And in many ways he was right, since the brick houses mostly remain, shaping our image of rural Virginia.



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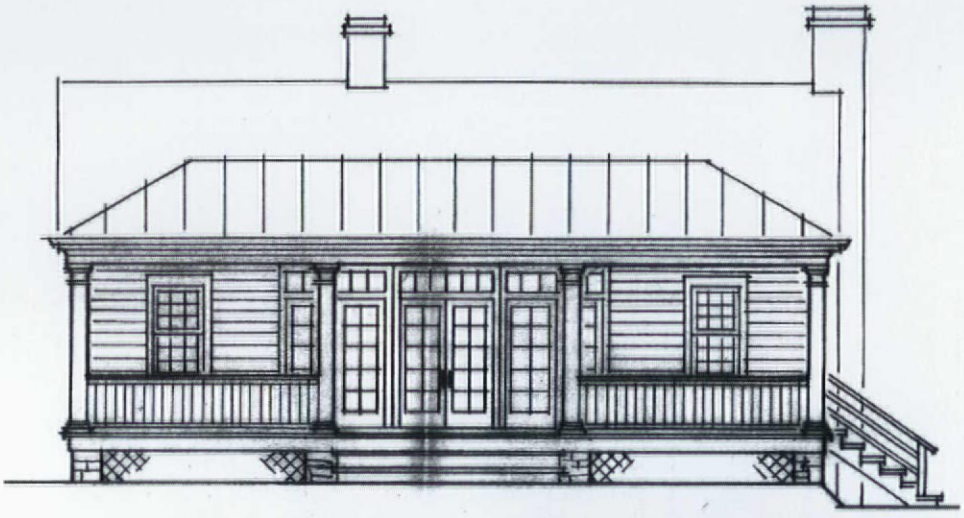

Left Frazier's rendering of the porch addition. *Below* French doors open onto a traditional open air porch. In keeping with the original structure, Frazier added a standing-seam metal roof.



It was just such a house that caught the eye of Bud Flanders and his late wife, Gate, as they explored country roads near the Shenandoah Valley town of Fishersville. Living in New Orleans at the time, the couple bought the property, known as Long Meadow Farm, and eventually moved into the Federal-style home, built in 1810 out of bricks fired on-site and laid in Flemish bond. "The house had not been butchered up," Flanders says. But it needed work to become a comfortable modern-day home, and after living in it to get a feel for the house, the Flanders decided to build an addition.

"The rooms in the house were all good size, but there was no casual space where we could get together with our grandchildren," recalls Flanders. "And as much as I love the look of the front porch," he says, referring to the simple white-painted columns and balustrade that stand out like a smile against the earthy red-brick façade, "it's too small for doing anything."

The couple hired Frazier Associates, an architecture firm in nearby Staunton known for its deft handling of historic buildings. After careful study, the archi-



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tects developed a plan to remove a tacked-on rear wing and to add a great room and mud room, totaling 600 square feet, with an attached porch. The space served the couple's contemporary needs but took its design cues from the existing house. "Our approach is contextual," says Kathy Frazier, the firm's principal architect. "When we add on to a historic house, we try to design something that suits its style and character so that it's not a jarring contrast."

The secret, she says, is in the details—all the specific architectural elements that add up to a pleasing whole. The idea isn't necessarily to mimic the original elements, which would result in historical rather than contemporary space, but rather to transfer them in a way that reads new space/old feel.

Take the windows, for example. In the sun-drenched great room, the architects included three windows and clustered three sets of French doors along the wall leading to the porch. "It creates a much bigger glass opening than an 1810 house would have ever had," Frazier says, "but we stuck with the same design vocabulary." They used Marvin doors and nine-over-nine double-sash windows with true divided lights, a close match to those on the original home; they topped the French doors with transom windows (a nod to the original transom over the front door), giving the high-ceilinged room an even airier feel. "Unlike plate-glass, these windows give a visual cue that makes you feel comfortable in the space," says Frazier.

Other details make the interior space a winner as well. The floor is new tongue-in-groove pine, stained to match the rich heart pine floors found throughout the house. Another semicontemporary touch that livens up the room is the wall of built-in shelves and cabinets wrapping around a pair of double-sash windows. The opening to the kitchen is extra wide—a subtle anachronism that improves flow and keeps the cook from feeling so isolated—but its trim details match those found on the other door frames.



Interior details include wood floors, a window seat, and built-in cupboards for storage. The nine-over-nine windows echo the proportions of the original windows.

The exterior brick wall is now on the inside, and its original window now peeks from the den into the dining room. Rather than cover the brick with sheetrock or plaster, the architects left the wall exposed, raising the ceiling above the beautiful decorative brick cornice in order to highlight rather than hide the detail.

The sun-catching French doors lead to the new porch, which runs the full length of the addition and spills out into the surrounding gardens. Boasting plenty of space for rockers and occasional tables, the area doesn't masquerade as an original porch—it's length, depth, and location on the rear of the house betray its late-twentieth-century origins—yet it fits the house like a glove, thanks again to traditional detailing. The simple square columns and custom-milled wood balustrade, all painted white, match those on the front porch. The ceiling is painted a traditional sky blue. The gently sloped



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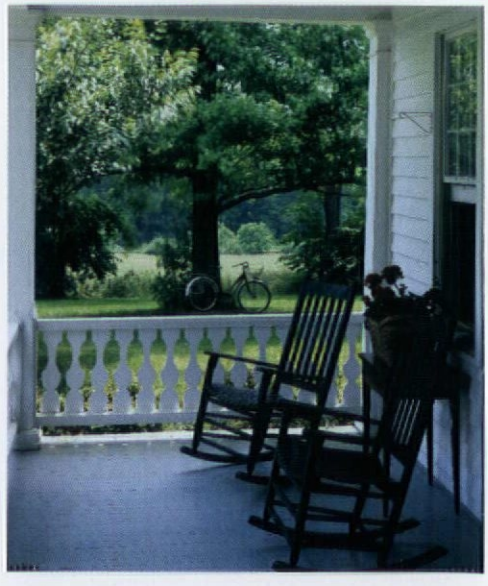
hip roof, clad in standing-seam metal, ties seamlessly to the rear wing's steep-pitched roof.

The new wing is clearly well built, another important factor in wedding new to old. "The craftsmanship of the new should equal what was already there, or it will stick out," says Frazier. The Flanders were lucky enough to find a contractor who understood and respected their old house. "He was patient. That's the main thing," remembers Flanders. "Most contractors are used to building from scratch. Contractors willing to work on old places have to deal with uncertainties."

In the end, one measure of the project's success was how radically it shifted the couple's leisure and entertaining focus to the home's north side. Before, all that stood on that side was a barbed-wire cattle fence. The fence is gone, replaced by lawn and gardens. "The addition gave us our best view. The Blue Ridge Mountains are right out there," Flanders says. "I never will forget shortly after we finished construction—we had a fundraising dinner for a local cultural institution. There was a short rain shower just after we got inside, and the most gorgeous rainbow spread across the valley. Everyone was in awe." NOH

Frazier Associates, 213 North Augusta St., Staunton, VA 24401; (540) 886-6230.

Logan Ward is a freelance writer living in Virginia.



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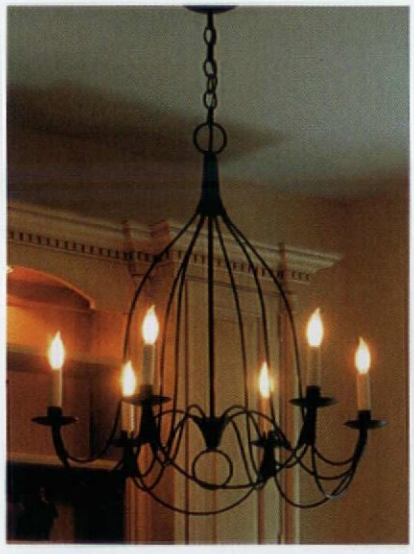

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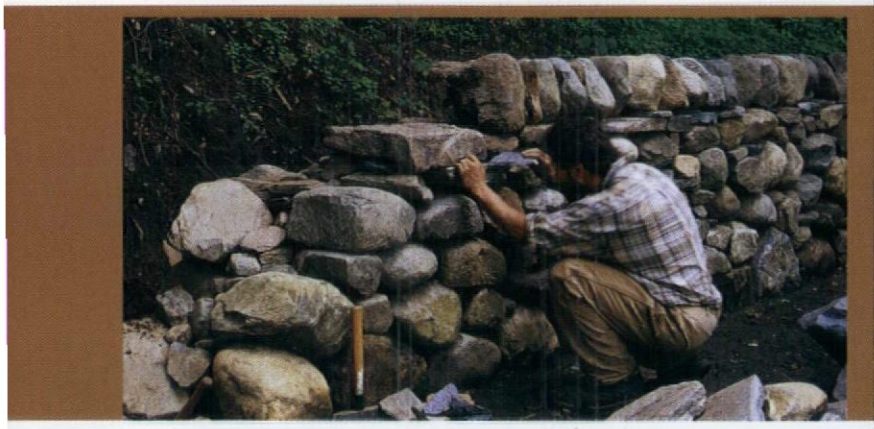
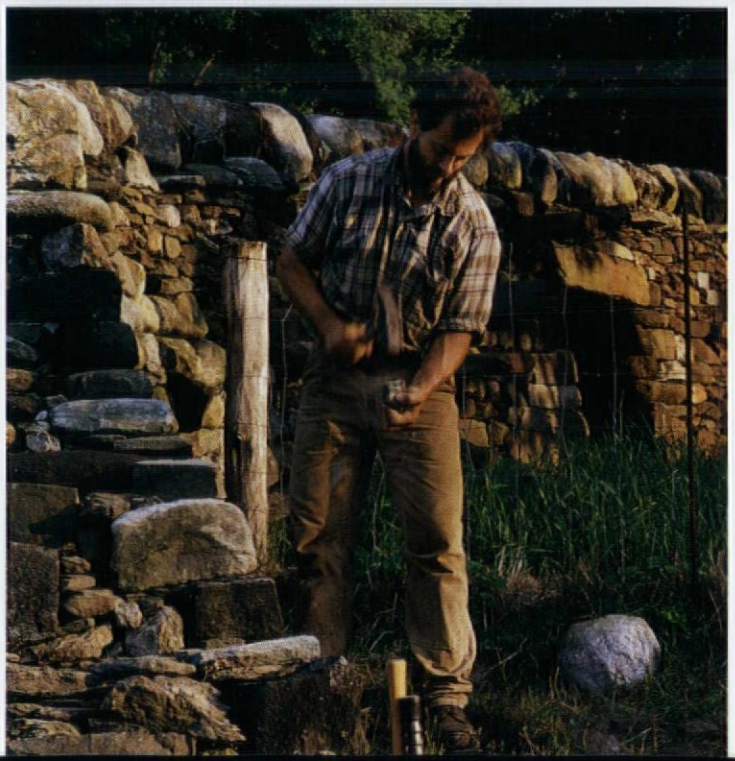
Stepping Stones

Lessons in the age-old practice of dry stone walling. TEXT BY APRIL PAFFRATH
PHOTOS BY PETER MAUSS







This page Michael Weitzner, a master dry stone wall, at work in Vermont. *Middle* The primitive tools of his trade: a hammer, chisel, and stone. *Opposite* Weitzner's creation of stone steps leading up to a barn.

On a drive along the small woodland roads of New England, you see rustic-looking stone walls running alongside roads and through fields or woods that were once fields. These walls were made long ago out of fieldstones, and while many no longer delineate the boundaries of roads or active livestock fields, they remain a valued part of the New England landscape. Many of them are at least 100 to 200 years old, and they're still standing. The dry stone walls were built with the available materials—nothing but rock—no mortar supports the stones. Mortar makes a wall inflexible, and ice and frost heaves can introduce cracks and destroy a mortared wall. A dry stone wall is flexible: It can move, and the stone can settle without falling down.



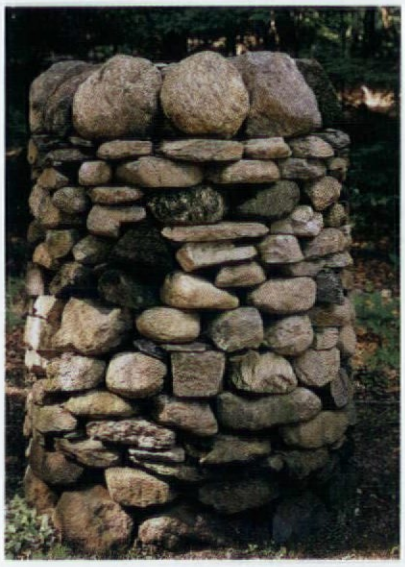
While the art of the dry stone wall is rare today, it is anything but dead. It is a craft that continues as an agricultural and fine trade in the United Kingdom and is maintained in the United States by a group of talented artisans who teach the intricacies and proper techniques to a new flock of dry stone wall builders.

In the United States, many residential clients want to add the look of traditional walls to their landscaping. Many who contact some of the country's best-trained professionals, such as Michael Weitzner of Thistle Stone Works in Brattleboro, Vermont, want something more than a wall that merely looks traditional; they want a structure that is built with quality, following traditional methods. Some homeowners want to add walls to their properties merely for aesthetic effect, but others are looking for retaining walls to help contour the property, steps and dry stone expanses, traditional dry stone foundations for houses and barns, and even more complicated structures such as bridges.

Weitzner is one of only five master craftsman dry stone wallers in the United States, the highest level of certification attainable by the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain, the organization that governs techniques and accreditation of stone wallers in the United Kingdom and is working to revive the craft. He not only constructs walls for clients in southern Vermont and nearby parts of New Hampshire but also commits time to training new wallers. He and Dan Snow (author of *In the Company of Stone*), another master craftsman in Vermont, teach all-day workshops to students who come from all over the country to learn both basics and advanced techniques of the trade. Weitzner began as a professional dry stone waller in 1993 in Edinburgh, Scotland, after deciding against a career in science. A few years later, Weitzner was invited to the United States to continue his work, and he settled in Vermont. He is clearly dedicated to his trade and conveys his vast knowledge precisely and quietly.

The skills that Weitzner teaches are the same ones he uses when building for his clients. No matter what the project, it all relies on the basics of simple wall con-

struction. "A wall is three-dimensional, not two-dimensional," says Weitzner. "It's not just a face. It has depth." That depth comes from two interconnected wall faces and a "hearting" center, the smaller stones packed between the two faces. What makes a well-made wall is a well-placed stone. Each stone must be placed with as much contact with the surrounding stones as possible so that friction and gravity keep the stone where it's planted. Each stone must be stable on its own, not teetering and propped into unstable positions with small wedge stones. Through stones, or face stones that project into or through the hearting material, add stability and tie together the parts of the wall. Although it is unseen, the hearting is not merely filler; it is essential to the strength of the wall, and it is packed as the wall is built. "You place a stone and then pack a stone," says Weitzner, quoting his mentor, master craftsman Neil Rippingale.



A freestanding, 4-foot-high round pillar is used as a property marker.

The top of the wall can be an opportunity to show some style. A wall can be left as is, and you will see the two faces and the hearting. Flat stones laid horizontally across the top of the wall, called a cap stone in New England, make a flat top along the wall and create a clean finish. Cope stones, stones placed upright and packed closely together, rest on top of the flat stones. They give the wall a uniform look and height and are common in the U.K. and in Kentucky, although not in New England. "I really like that approach," says Weitzner. Cope stones might be big, round stones of equal size along the top of the wall, or they could be thin stones set nearly vertical, like a leaning line of books. As with all things handmade by an artisan, it is the artistry and style that add the extra element of quality. Cope stones are an excellent way to add a finished and unique look to a wall.

Retaining walls, which hold back earth on one side, use construction techniques similar to those of a freestanding wall. The wall slopes inward toward the earth embankment, which makes it less likely to teeter outward and fail when rain and earth press on it. The through stones jut into the earth embankment, grabbing onto the surrounding dirt and adhering the wall and earth together. Dry stone foundation walls are made this way because they are essentially retaining the earth on all sides of the house or barn.

Weitzner likes to tackle interesting jobs, like foundations. "If a project is unusual, I'm intrigued," says Weitzner, "although I'm always cautious." He wants to make sure a project can be done well and done right before he takes it on. Restoration work is a large part of dry stone walling because walls require maintenance. Old walls that are damaged or in danger of falling need to be addressed properly. "I'm very keen on restoration," Weitzner says. "It's nice to see people interested in proper stone walling and upkeep instead of using prefab materials." A wall repair often involves taking down a section of the stones without damaging the surrounding structure and then rebuilding the section with the problem corrected. "A repair needs to look like the original, yet without the faults of the original," Weitzner says.

Most walls that do not last are built by people who lack experience. Stones that make up the face of the wall should be placed based on stability; an inexperienced builder may sacrifice structural position to place the prettiest or longest facet toward the outside, or the joints between stones may line up vertically and make what are called "running joints," which can cause vulnerability in



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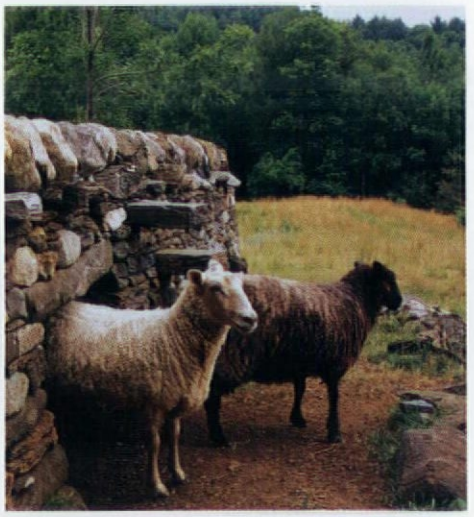
the wall. "The real difference between a master craftsman and the others is experience," says Weitzner. Masters understand the intricacies of the structures because of their years of experience. They know how to shape and work with stones, and they understand how a wall will act over time. The skills and knowledge that Weitzner imparts to his students do a lot toward helping the trade stay alive and vibrant. NOH

Master Class: The day-long workshops that Michael Weitzner and Dan Snow teach impart structural skills to students of all levels, following the guidelines of the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain. The students get hands-on training. Contact Weitzner for information.

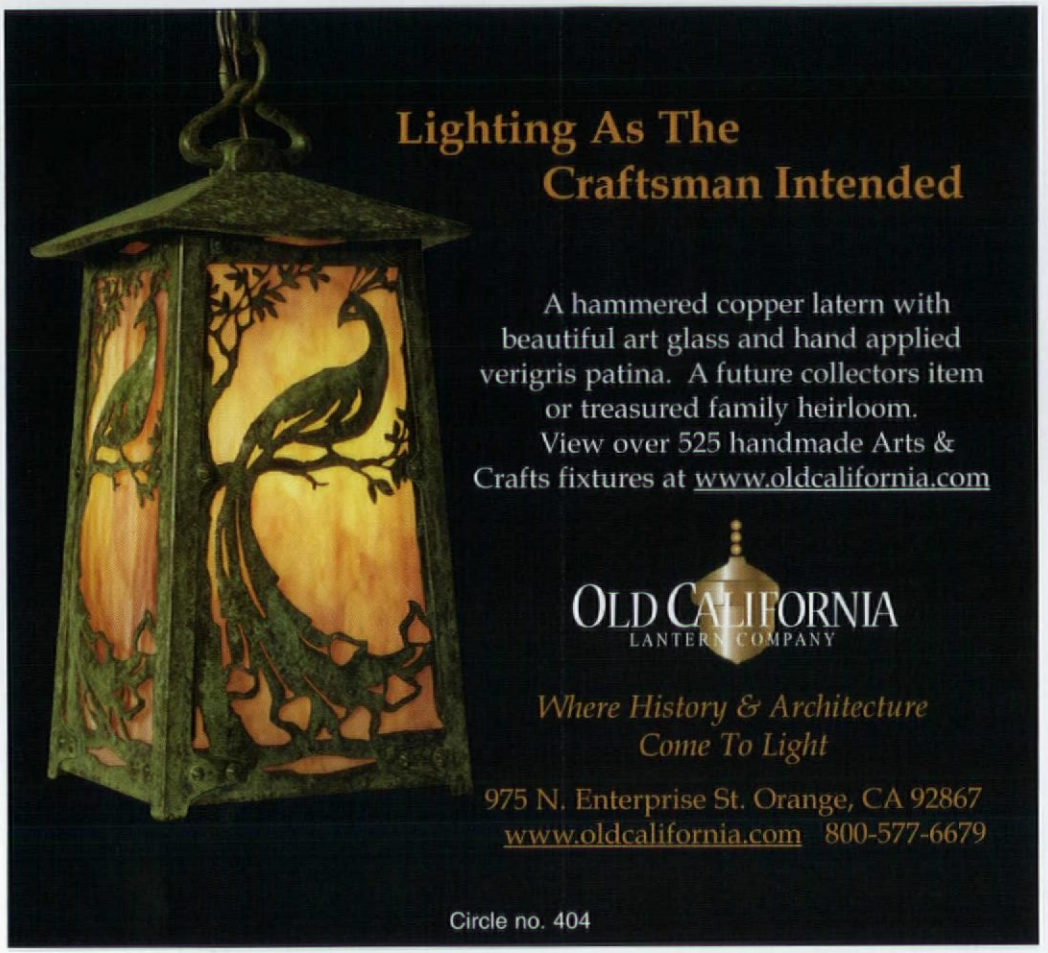
Michael Weitzner Thistle Stone Works, 340 Goodenough Road, Brattleboro, Vermont 05301-8967; thistledew@globalnetisp.net

Weitzner works mostly in southeastern Vermont. To find other professional and credentialed dry stone wallers, visit the Dry Stone Walling Association of Great Britain's Web site, www.dswa.org.uk. Click the "overseas" link to see a list of other certified wallers in the United States.

April Paffrath is a freelance writer living in Cambridge, Massachusetts.



Weitzner built an enclosed wall with a pass-through for sheep to walk from one pasture to another. He also incorporated "stiles"—stepped stones for easily climbing for the herder.







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Fanciful Floors

TEXT BY ELIZABETH DOWNEY PHOTOS BY JEFFREY ALLEN

Stenciling, a centuries-old folk art, finds new expression in new old homes.

The art of stenciling has a long history in this country, particularly in New England. In old saltboxes, Capes, and Federal row houses all around the Northeast, many homeowners have discovered ancient stenciled walls and floors, dating back to the 1700s, hiding under generations of wallpaper and floor coverings. An economical and sanitary adornment to the home in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, stenciling was used to embellish walls by humble farmer and wealthy urban merchant alike. Stenciling was economical because the homeowner did not have to import expensive painted wallpapers from England and France, and it was seen as more sanitary because insects could live behind wallpapers.

Itinerant decorative painters would traverse the countryside offering their services to innkeepers, shop owners, and homeowners alike. The art found expression in both primitive folk motifs, such as fruits, flowers, birds, and trees (mainly used in rural farmhouses), and high-style classical elements, such as acanthus leaves, swags, fans, and bellflowers (found in city dwellings). Early influences were predominantly English many belonged to the Painter-Stainer Guild in London before emigrating to the colonies. Once coming to America, these artists taught their sons the craft, which kept the art alive.

Artists borrowed heavily from textile and wallpaper patterns of the period. Some of the earliest colors used were red, black, and white. As more pigments were imported, such as gray, green, and Prussian indigo, the artist's color palette became richer. Ann Eckert Brown notes in *American Wall Stenciling 1790–1840*, "The most popular design was very similar to the typical wallpaper layout of the time. The elements included horizontal borders at the ceiling (frieze), baseboard, and chair rail, if there were one, with the frieze being the most important." These vertical borders divided the room's walls, and alternating floral and geometric patterns were used as fillers.

Two of the most famous stencilers in early America were Thomas Child and



For this classically detailed interior in a new old house on Nantucket, artist Molly Plaster created this elaborate stencil design. Inspired by historical patterns, Plaster created a painted "carpet" for her client.

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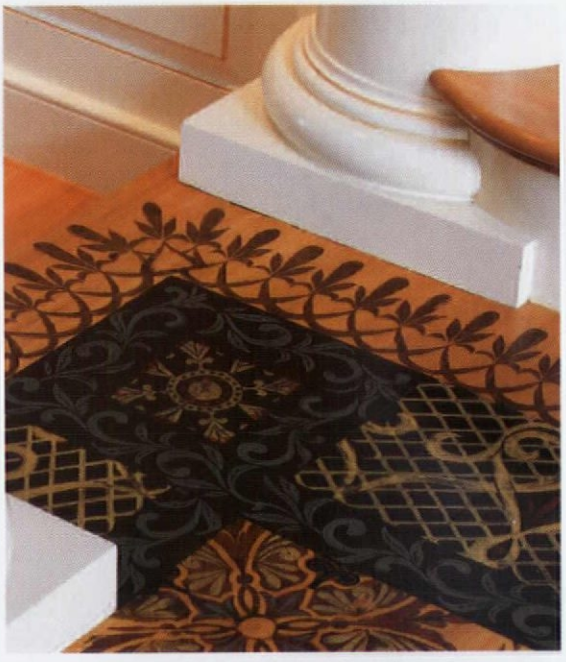



Close-up details of the flooring reveal swags, acanthus leaves, fleur-de-lis, and bows. For this room design, Molly Plaster worked closely with Seldom Scene Interiors in the town of Nantucket to create a whimsical yet high-style interior.

John Gibbs. Their work is identifiable because they often left their signatures on the walls they decorated alongside their artwork.

Artistic Revival

Today, the ancient art of stenciling is being revived not only on walls but also on floors. Molly Plaster of Yarmouth, Massachusetts, is one such artist who, like itinerant artists before her, travels the New England landscape stenciling floors in the region's new old houses. Although she is a self-taught painter, she attended Parsons School of Design to study metalwork and, upon graduating, began her artistic career designing jewelry, which she sold through national department stores. The pace of creating four seasonal collections a year became a bit hectic with her two small girls underfoot so she began to paint. One weekend she found herself stenciling her daughter's bureau and fell in love with the process and the color. "I found the metalwork too limiting," she says, "and I discovered I could turn a fairly ordinary piece of furniture into something special." She began stenciling walls and ceilings 14 years ago and hasn't looked back. Her decorative painting takes her from the Island of Nantucket to New York City to Connecticut's countryside. She draws her inspiration from historical designs. "I find ideas in old fabric, wallpaper, and decorative ironwork on buildings," she says. "I even created a stencil from an antique piece of wrapping paper that I found while visiting Paris."

When creating a stencil pattern for a particular floor, Molly incorporates the grain of the wood into the design. "I like the natural pattern of the wood to show through," she says. "It adds interest and texture." Always a work in progress, Plaster's designs evolve over time. She meets with the interior designer and homeowner, and they discuss the theme of the design and choose a color palette, and Plaster takes it from there. Plaster works out the design on acetate paper

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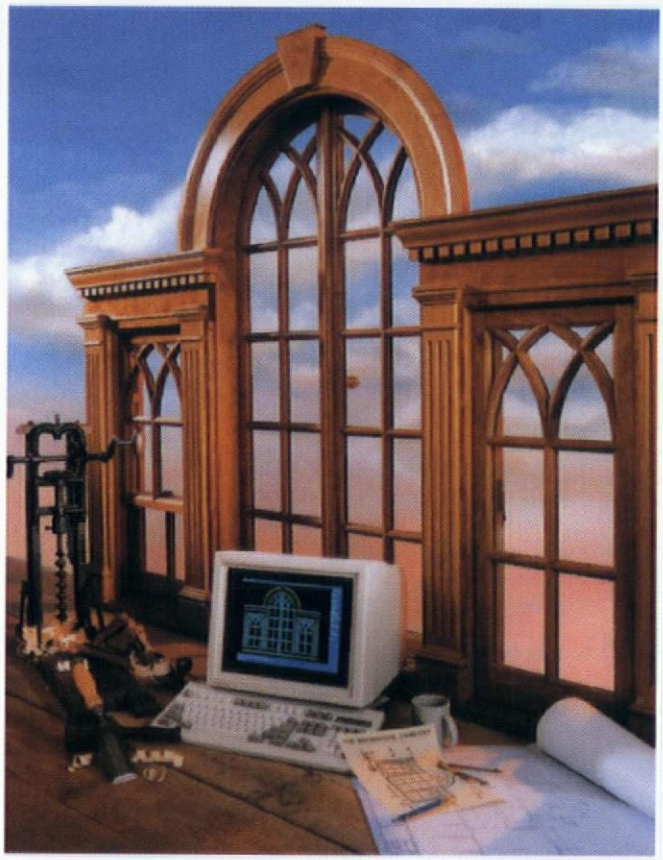

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For a refurbished fisherman's shanty on Nantucket, Plaster chose a fanciful palette of bright blues and oranges for the pine floor. Plaster allows the wood graining to show through, which becomes part of the design.



and cuts out the "positive" pattern with a utility knife. Plaster likes to work with muted tones—mustard, olive green, soft red, taupe. She uses up to seven different stencils in her designs.

Much like the historical patterns of the past, Molly often employs an elaborate border, with two to three different vertical designs, and fills in the center with floral patterns and geometrical shapes. She also uses historical classical forms in her designs: Swags, acanthus leaves, and ribbons are reoccurring elements as well as fleur-de-lis and scrolls.

She uses latex-based paints and a polyurethane water-based sealer to protect the design and the floor. "My clients are surprised how well the design holds up to foot traffic," she says.

Plaster does much of her research at historical estates and museums. She has recently re-created a folk art wall mural in a Connecticut farmhouse. She often gets requests for stenciled kitchen and bathroom cabinets as well as faux graining and marbling. "It's a wonderful way to add beauty to an ordinary piece of wood," says Plaster. NOH

For more on historic stenciling, read America's Wall Stenciling 1790 to 1840 *by Ann Eckert Brown (University Press of New England 2003.)*

Molly Plaster Decorative Painting, Yarmouth Port, Massachusetts; (508) 375-0905; mollyplaster@yahoo.com

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Elizabeth Downey is a freelance writer.



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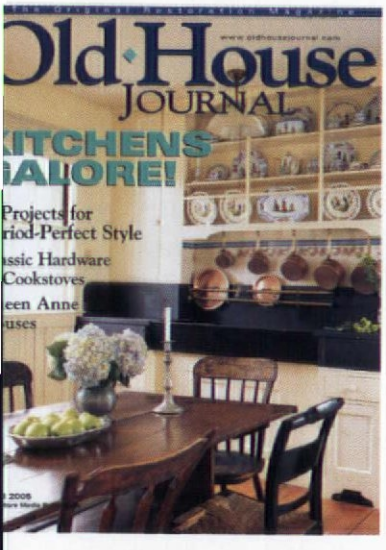

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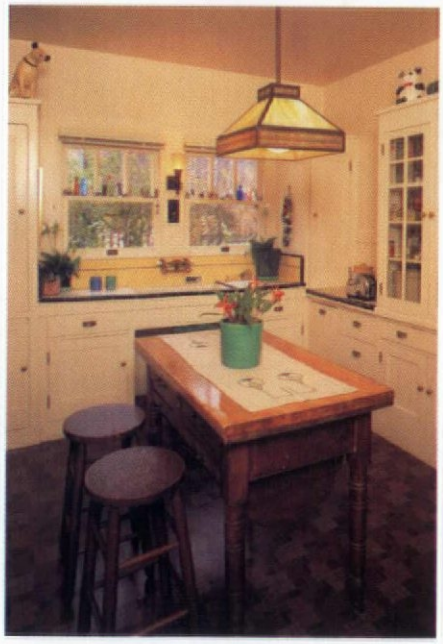

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Converted Carriage House

An old defunct plan book barn becomes a show house on Maine's coast.

TEXT BY NANCY E. BERRY PHOTOS BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



The Thorn House in Bass Harbor, Maine, was a horse barn and carriage house a hundred years ago. Architect Christian Fasoldt re-created the structure as a three-season getaway for Susan and Bill Thorn. The historic character of farm buildings can be lost when they are adapted for new uses. Fasoldt was careful not to let this happen by adhering to some simple guidelines set by the National Park Service.

The fanciful Victorian, with its checkerboard colored-glass windows, scalloped shingles, and proud cupola, creates a handsome composition against Maine's autumnal meadow. It's hard to believe this decoratively detailed structure was originally built more than a century ago to house horses rather than humans. The stable and carriage house design was from R. W. Shoppell's 1889 *Modern Houses* plan book. Robert Shoppell was an architect and one of the leading purveyors of house plans in the late 1800s. Purchased and built by Charles Dix for his wife, Almira, as a gift in the 1890s, the horse barn remained in use for its intended purpose until 1919, when the property was sold. At that time, the barn became obsolete because of the advent of the horseless carriage. For decades the building sat abandoned, its equally



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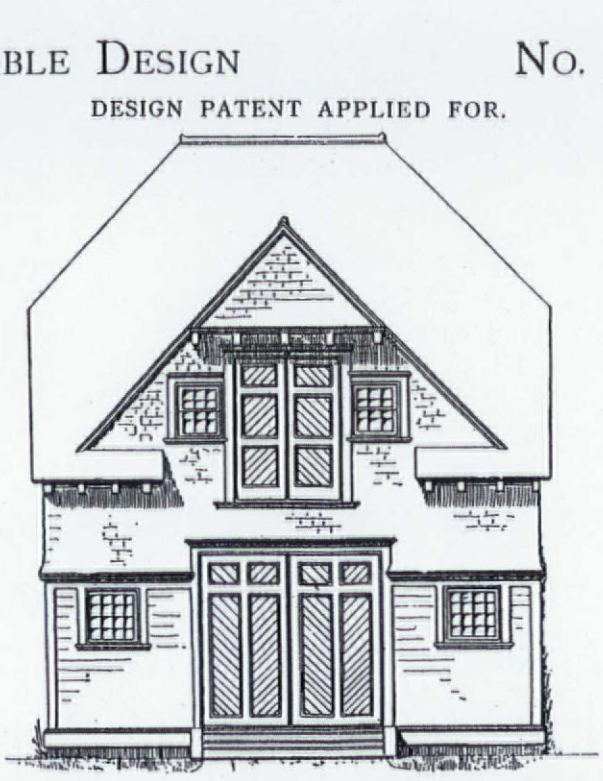
detailed main house long gone.

When Bill and Susan Thorn discovered the property on a summer vacation, they recognized the potential this little barn had. They purchased the carriage house, which had been recently moved 50 feet from its original spot, and decided to turn the defunct stable into a three-season cottage retreat. "We fell in love with the harbor views and wanted to save this beautiful old structure," says Bill Thorn.

Its unique nature, an existing plan book outbuilding—the only known barn designed from a plan book in Maine—made it a perfect candidate for the National Register of Historic Places. The owners were determined to save the building and to preserve as much of the original structure and its features as possible. They hired architect Christian Fasoldt of Rockport, Maine, who had worked on several preservation projects, to help maintain the integrity of the building while reincarnating it for its new use—a home away from home.

"There are many surviving plan book houses around the country, but it's rare to find an outbuilding still in existence," says Fasoldt. "When I came to look at the structure, it was being used for storage as well as a house for a family of raccoons." In order to qualify for the National Register of Historic Places, the restoration and rehabilitation needed to follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation (a list of do's and don'ts) throughout the restoration process. The guidelines include such advice as: Avoid changing the size of the door openings, repair existing windows (rather than replace and/or add windows), repair historical siding, preserve the historic setting as much as possible, and minimize additions. The Thorns and Fasoldt, working closely with the Maine Preservation Historic Commission, met all of these challenges and more.

"When working with an old build-



FRONT ELEVATION OF DESIGN NO. 589.

Left The original carriage house plan from Shoppell's 1889 *Modern Houses*. Fasoldt left the original sliding barn doors on their track, while incorporating new glass doors that are easier for the Thorns to operate.



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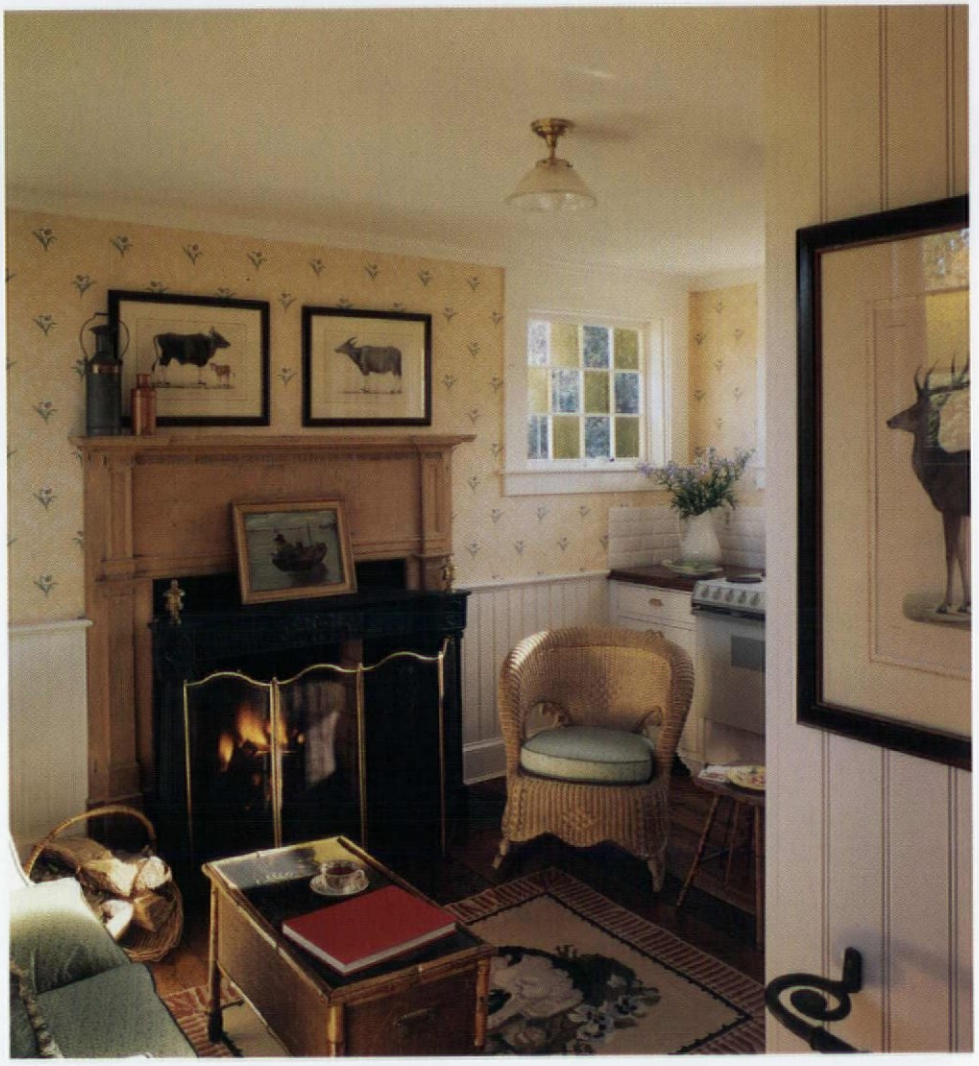
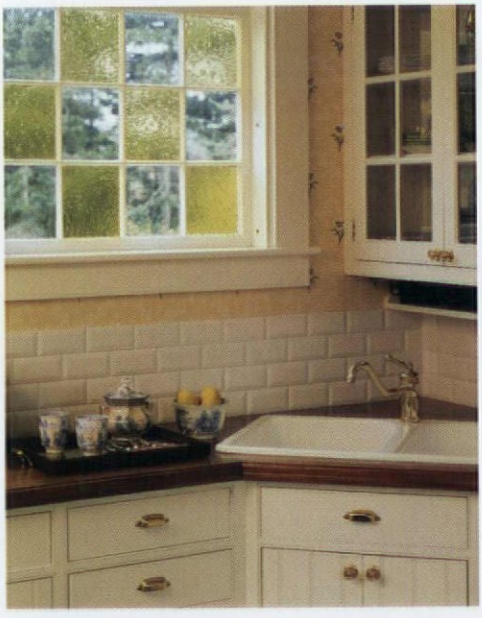
ing, there's a certain language that's spoken, and you have to learn how to speak that language," says Fasoldt. He not only had to learn the language of the building but turn it into a livable space. The building needed all the modern amenities—plumbing, heating, and electricity—which were all introduced without changing the footprint of the structure. Because the house was moved and set on a new foundation, a daylight basement was created. Here Fasoldt added two bedrooms and a bath. "It was a challenge creating a set of stairs down to the lower level," says Fasoldt, although, he admits that his greatest challenge was incorporating a kitchen into the structure without cutting into any original beams. Instead of adding on, which the Standards caution against, Fasoldt created a master suite in the hayloft. A cathedral ceiling and antique beams were added to the space—elements not original to the barn but aesthetically appropriate for the room all the same.

On the main floor, little has changed since the barn was built—the existing bead board and box-molding interior walls were in good shape and just needed a fresh coat of paint. Wrought-iron feed baskets rest in their original spots, dressing the dining room appropriately.





Although Fasoldt saved many original materials, the Thorns found salvaged barn flooring in Connecticut to replace the rotting stable floor.

The exterior work was less of a challenge for Fasoldt and general contractor John Allgood, who was "in the spirit of doing things exactly the way they used to be," says Fasoldt. Many of the scalloped shingles were in good condition, and those compromised were removed and replicated by local carpenter Owen Gray. The cupola was also in good shape and needed little repair. The Thorns had colored panes of glass replicated where they were missing from the original windows. In order to make an entry that was more practical for human use, Fasoldt introduced glass doors (much easier to operate

Above Fasoldt added a small kitchen into the structure complete with wood-burning hearth. *Left* The fixed window above the kitchen sink still has its original colored glass panes.

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for the Thorns) on the exterior of the original wooden track doors. The historical commission approved the glass doors because they did not disrupt the historic fabric of the building and they could be removed at a later point. Susan Thorn, an interior designer by trade, decorated the interior with antique wicker and pretty floral fabrics to create a casual weekend décor.

The couple's unbridled enthusiasm for their carriage house *cum* vacation getaway is apparent when you talk to Bill Thorn. "We wish we could get up there more often; it's a special place," he says. By creating a new use for an old relic, the Thorns have saved a piece of Maine's history from being put out to pasture. NOH

For more information from the National Park Service on adaptive reuse of farm buildings, visit www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/brief20.htm.





Above The stalls' hay grates were left in place—perfectly appropriate for the new dining room setting. *Left* Fasoldt created a master bedroom out of the original hay loft.

Christian Fasoldt, Architect, 40 Pascal Avenue, Rockport, ME 04856; (207) 236-6569.

Susan Thorn, ASID, Susan Thorn Interiors, P.O. Box 187, Cross River, NY 10518; (914) 763-5265





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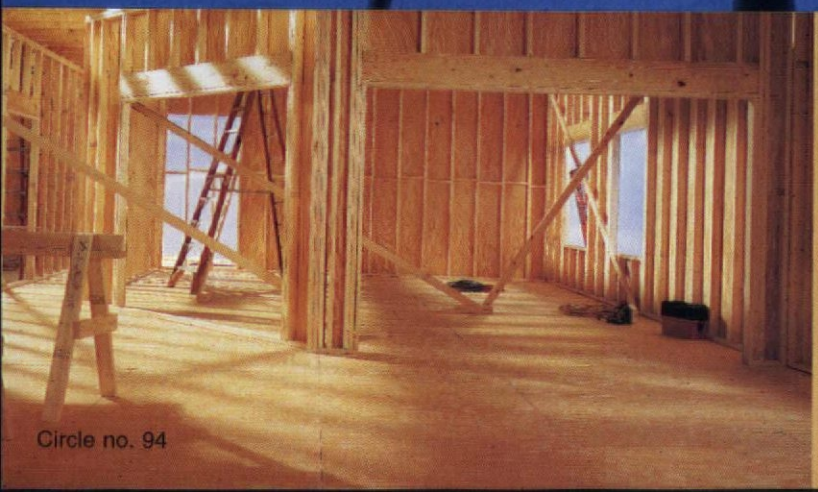

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Outside the Bungalow

TEXT BY MICHAEL WEISHAN
PHOTOS BY DOUG KEISTER

The right landscaping creates harmony between house and garden.



Bungalow gardens should be all about saying welcome. Here, day lilies, achillea, buddleia, and a host of other perennials form the flower-filled entrance to this home.

Large or small, [a garden] should look both orderly and rich. It should be well fenced from the outside world. It should by no means imitate either the willfulness or the wildness of nature, but it should look like a thing never to [be] seen except near a house. It should, in fact, look like part of the house.

William Morris
"Hopes and Fears for Art," 1882

People often ask me what is the most important element of good garden design, and if pressed to give a single answer, I would have to say "unity of house and garden." When architecture and landscape architecture share a similar style, the result is a harmonious marriage in which all sorts of minor sins can be forgiven. But when house and garden disagree, the outcome is inevitably an expensive divorce that cancels the potential of both. If you're the owner of a bungalow-style house, the mission of fostering harmonious relations between house and garden is particularly crucial, as the small scale and clean horizontal lines of American Arts and Crafts-inspired architecture can easily be overwhelmed by bad planting choices and poor hardscape selections. Here are some tips for making sure that your bungalow sports a garden that complements, rather than competes with, your home.

Keep It Simple

The Arts and Crafts Movement—the progenitor of the bungalow style—valued simple materials honestly worked, and this same basic philosophy should permeate your garden. Although something of a historical oversimplification,



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In warmer climates, bungalows are often constructed with large areas of glass and multiple doorways. The landscape should then be designed to take advantage of these features, with ample outdoor living areas like the one at left. Below, a typical bungalow-style fence.



the cozy, welcoming nature of the bungalow garden partially derives from the romanticized vision of an English workingman's cottage, and replicating the simple flower-filled landscapes associated with these structures is a good starting point for the modern bungalow dweller.

The key to re-creating this kind of craftsman look and feel outdoors lies with the hardscape. It's the bones of the garden—the walks, drives, patios, terraces, and outbuildings—that really set the tone for the entire landscape, and a conscientious effort needs to be made to make sure that these elements have an appropriate look and feel. You'll want, for example, to avoid using glaringly modern products like concrete or asphalt for paving and instead choose a brick or stone that matches your home, making sure that the "art and craft" part of the equation is evident by utilizing interesting patterns or shapes to enhance the natural beauty of your chosen material. Fences (an almost ubiquitous facet of Arts and Crafts gardens) should also be selected to complement the house, which for a bungalow almost inevitably means some type of wooden fence. Styles consisting of simple handmade pickets or ones with wide boards featuring cutout designs were especially popular. In an era before air-conditioning, backyard structures such as arbor seats and gazebos were another important aspect of bungalow gardens, allowing the various areas of the landscape to serve as outdoor living rooms. Often built at the same time as the house, these structures deliberately echoed the home's architecture and often utilized the same construction materials, providing the perfect link between house and garden.

Keep the Planting in Scale

Whereas modern bungalows are often much larger in terms of square footage than those built even a few decades ago, today's homes still share the same vertical scale as that of their predecessors. This means that when it's time to choose plants for your landscape, it's particularly important that you select cultivars that won't outgrow their welcome. Towering shade trees or large, dense evergreens planted next to the foundation will quickly obfuscate the lines of the architecture and come to dominate both house and landscape. Instead, focus on selecting dwarf cultivars of your favorite trees; for any material to be planted near the house, choose species that at full maturity will remain well beneath the windowsills.

Remember, too, that when designing a foundation planting, not all the material needs to be evergreen; in fact, one of the keys to creating a cottage-style garden is a heavy use of flowering deciduous plants in the form of shrubbery, perennials, and annuals. The seasonal rise and fall of these deciduous plants add variety to the landscape, and the sparse winter mass of deciduous species counterbalances the dense appearance of evergreens. Finally, with all your plant selections, you should try to find species with interest in more than one season. Many desirable cultivars feature combinations of foliage, flower, and shape that possess year-round appeal. This, of course, is good advice for any style of landscape, but it takes on special importance in the bungalow garden, as



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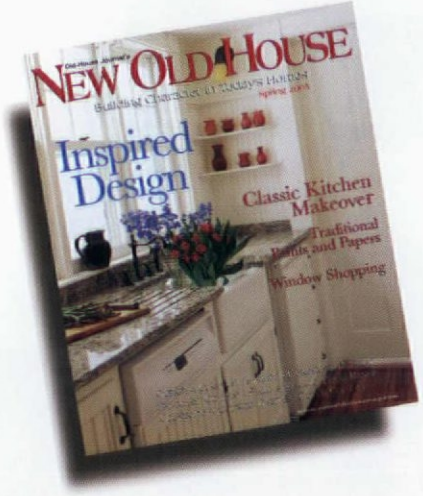

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Often set on small lots, bungalows don't have a lot of outdoor space to waste, so that means making optimal use of your front and side yards.

plants with attractive and unusual foliage or flower will highlight the Craftsman aspect of your garden.

Don't Forget the Front

Bungalows traditionally were constructed on narrow lots with little or no space for side yards, and in an era of soaring land prices, this trend continues unabated. Thus, if you're the owner of a bungalow, chances are much of your available acreage lies in the front yard, and it's important to utilize this area to the fullest. Whereas most people have no problem envisioning what to do behind the house, the front yard looms as a difficult blank slate for many beginning gardeners. Given the bungalow's general homey appearance, you should try your best to enhance this feeling by making sure that your front yard says welcome to both you and your guests.

In many cases, this means minimalizing the blank feeling produced by one of the great banes of the average modern American landscape—the overly large lawn—in favor of a more diversified approach that incorporates the best elements of hardscape and softscape. Features like a broad front walk with easy access to street and drive; flower-filled in-scale plantings along the foundation; fences or walls that delineate the borders of the property without denying access—all these make the front yard a place to enjoy rather than just to pass through. A large front porch (another almost ubiquitous feature of bungalow architecture) attractively decorated with comfortable chairs, container plants, and other amenities for outdoor living completes the picture.

Keep in mind that what charmed bungalow owners in the first place—and what continues to charm them today—is the cozy, romantic nature of the bungalow. If you strive to ensure that your landscape shares this same look and feel, your role as matchmaker between house and garden is bound to bear ample rewards. NOH

New Old House *garden editor Michael Weishan is the host of PBS's "The Victory Garden" and the principal of his landscape design firm, Michael Weishan & Associates. For more information visit, www.michaelweishan.com.*

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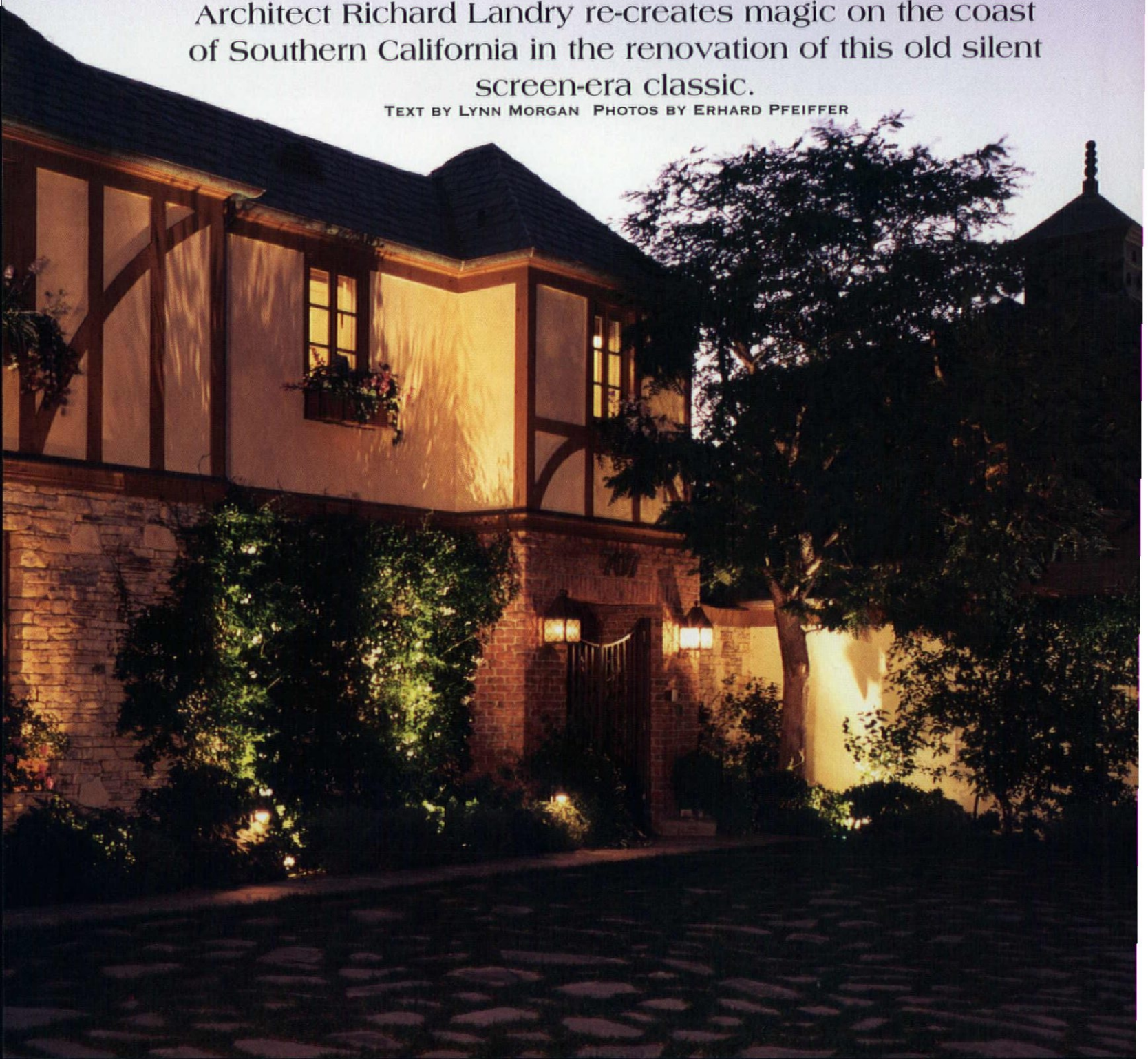
Architect Richard Landry, principal of the Landry Design Group, renovated this 1920s Tudor-style house in Los Angeles. Originally designed by architect John Byers for movie mogul Irving Thalberg and his wife film, actress Norma Shearer, the house received a new stone and brick façade, slate roof, and copper chimney cap during its extensive restoration and renovations.

Tudor Revival Hollywood Style

Architect Richard Landry re-creates magic on the coast of Southern California in the renovation of this old silent screen-era classic.

TEXT BY LYNN MORGAN PHOTOS BY ERHARD PFEIFFER





In the courtyard façade, Landry added a dormered balcony, a two-story window at the main stairwell, as well as flower boxes at the eyebrow and casement windows. The landscaping gives a sense of an English country cottage. *Right top* The courtyard balcony received new custom light fixtures. Landry painted the doors in a faux grain finish. *Right bottom* The attic was turned into a clubroom and has unobstructed views of the Pacific Ocean.

Like a faded screen idol, the old beachfront house in Los Angeles had great features and an illustrious history; it just needed a few nips and tucks to be ready for a comeback. Designed by architect John Byers as a retreat for the legendary Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM) producer Irving G. Thalberg and his wife, actress Norma Shearer, the whimsical English Tudor was built by MGM craftsmen and laborers. It was both a refuge for the dynamic but sickly Thalberg and his young family and a glittering salon that welcomed Hollywood's elite.

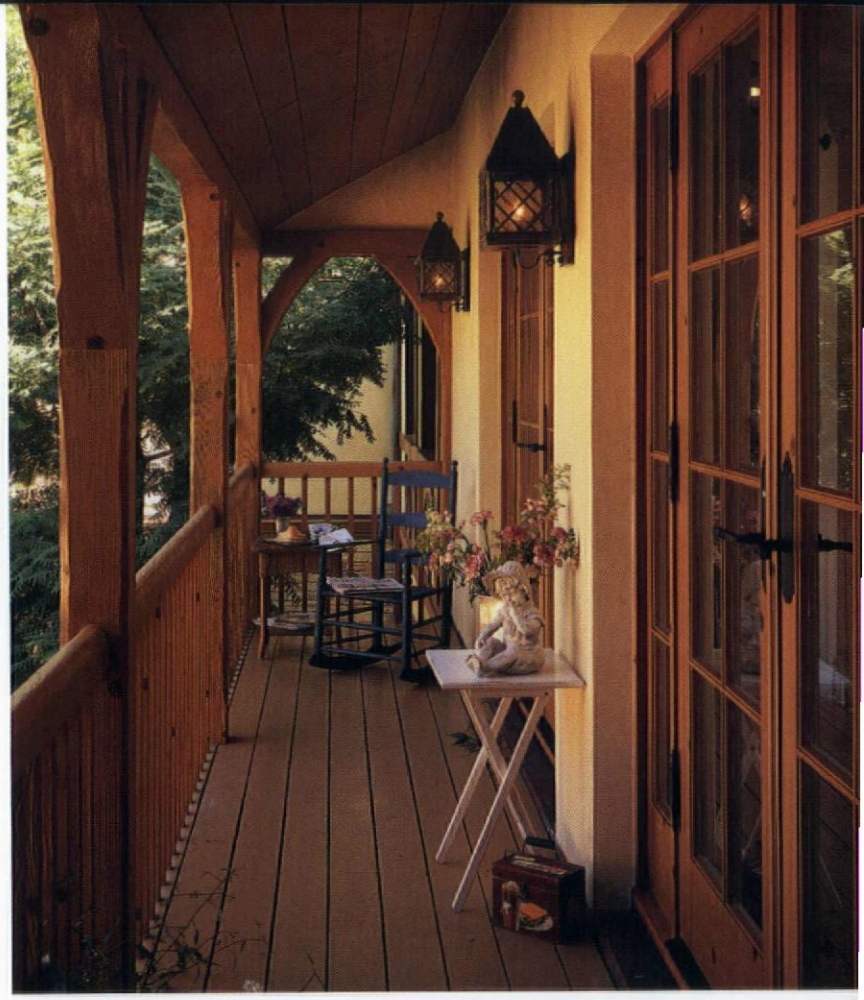
As head of production at MGM (the biggest and most successful movie studio of its time), Thalberg was known as Hollywood's "boy wonder" during the 1920s and early 1930s. He was the driving force behind such films as *Grand Hotel*, *Mata Hari*, *Mutiny on the Bounty*, *Camille*, and *A Night at the Opera*, and he was the real-life model for the fictional character Monroe Stahr in F. Scott Fitzgerald's final and unfinished novel, *The Last Tycoon*. Thalberg helped establish the Academy Awards and guided the careers of directors such as Erich von Stroheim and Ernst Lubitsch as well as stars such as Clark Gable and Greta Garbo. The beautiful and elegant Norma Shearer lit up the screen in *The Barretts of Wimpole Street*, *Marie Antoinette*, and *The Women*. The Thalbergs entertained often and lavishly, and Fitzgerald immortalized their afternoon brunches at the beach in his short story "Crazy Sunday."

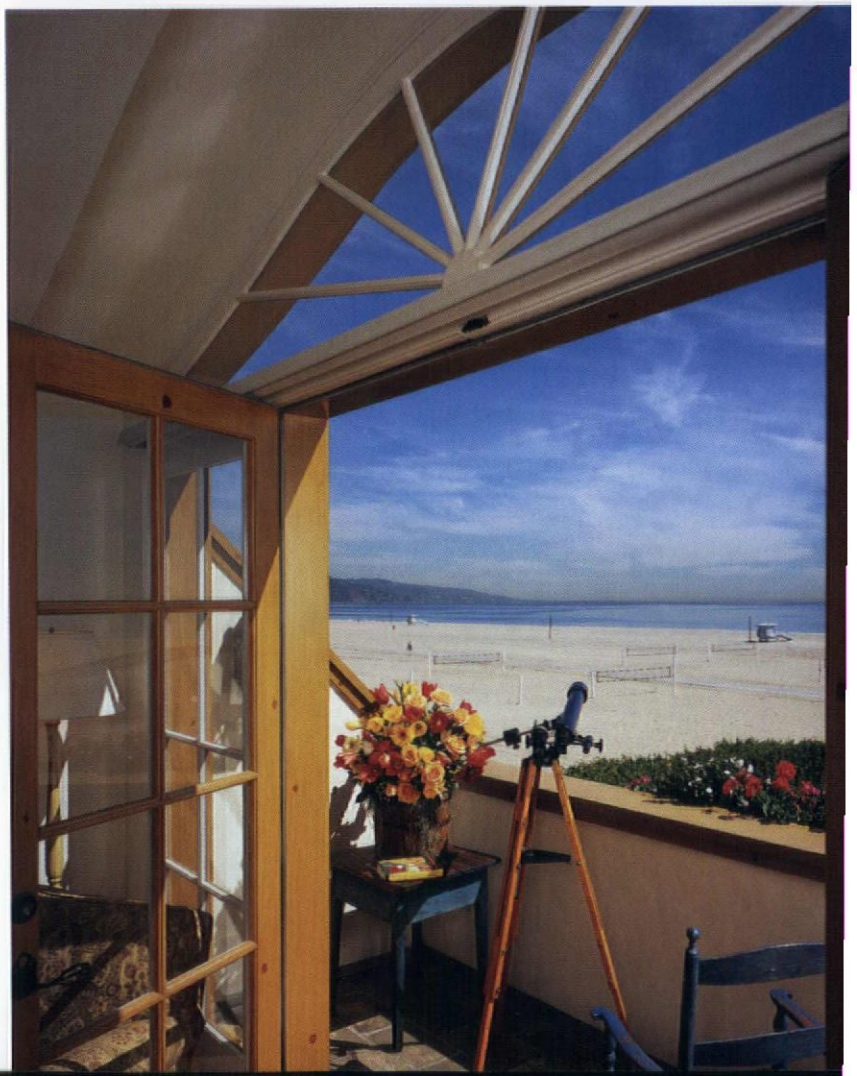
Thalberg died in 1936 at the age of 37. Over the next seven decades, the house changed hands again and again, and each new owner made changes according to his or her own taste or the prevailing fashion, stripping away period details and adding "modern" touches until little of the original character remained. Almost 70 years after the last tycoon's last party, architect Richard Landry, AIA, president of Landry Design Group in Los Angeles, received a phone call from prospective new clients who had just purchased an old beach house in Los Angeles. "Originally, they wanted to tear the house down," says Landry. "I talked them out of it."

This is unusual advice for an architect, especially one who is internationally renowned for his opulent residential designs, both modern and classically inspired. This project, however, was a little different. "It was in an unfortunate state of disrepair," according to the Montreal-born architect. "It had been remodeled several times over the years, and each addition made it worse. It had great history, though, and great bones. It was worth saving."

The renovation and restoration took 14 months and proved to be as complex and challenging as designing and building an entirely new house. "It's easier just to build a new house," says contractor Gordon Gibson of Gordon Gibson Construction, the builder on the project. "Because of the new building codes, when you renovate a house of this age, you have to strip it completely down to the studs. This house in particular had been both neglected and extensively remodeled. That was one of the design difficulties for Richard—determining what the original architecture had been."

A supremely practical man and astute observer of architectural history, Gibson cautions anyone caught up in the romance of renovation. "It's very difficult and expensive to restore an old house, and very often when people say they want a completely "authentic" period house, they don't take into consideration that authentic older houses had small bathrooms and didn't have spa tubs and the bells and whistles that people expect in







A guest bedroom received a cathedral ceiling of salvaged beams and a heavy truss. The room is decorated with Swedish country antiques.



Landry designed new custom cabinetry reminiscent of old apothecary drawers. A farmhouse sink upstages the typical pedestal. An antique door separates the toilet room.



In the study, Landry customed-designed built-in shelving and a fire-place mantel with a reproduction blue-and-white delft tile surroun

their homes today. Period houses had limited closet space; people had armoires for storage. The homes didn't have large kitchens, because those were staff-oriented rooms. Older houses usually had smaller paned windows. The California lifestyle contradicts all of these things: We want storage, and we want huge windows to enjoy the views and flood our rooms with light. The challenge, then, is to update the structure with sensitivity to the original design but take into account the fact that times and tastes and the culture have changed."

The Thalberg house deserved special consideration. "It has a lot of history," says Gibson. "Barron Hilton owned it, too, for a lot of years. It's a wonderful piece of architecture. Richard Landry did a great job of preserving its essence: He kept the exterior balconies. The pitch of the roof is the same. He saved the things that made it special."

"It's a different type of challenge," Landry says. "When you start from scratch, you have a clean canvas, and you can create your own composition. When you restore an existing house, you have to take into account its history and integrity. While I was working on this house, I kept asking myself, 'What would John Byers do today for this client?' I wanted to respect his work and his ideas."

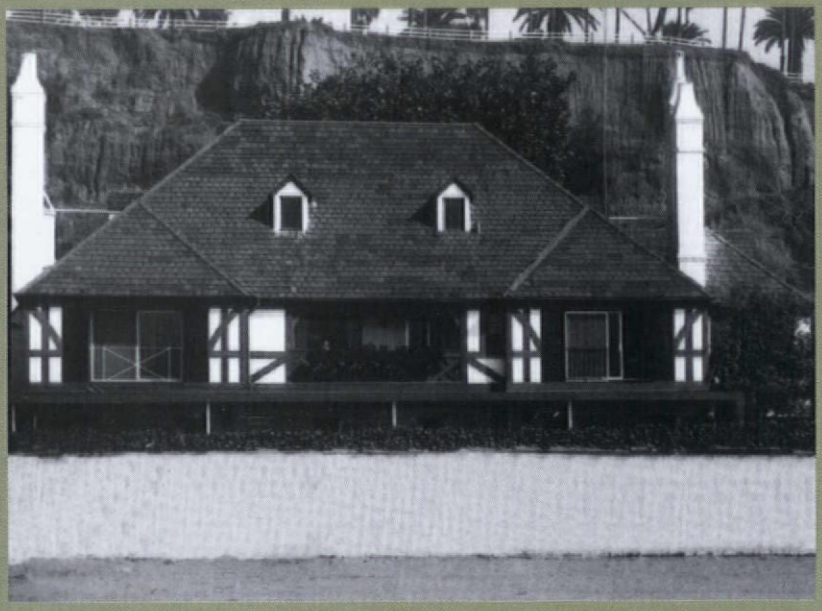
"It was a darker choice for him," Landry continues reflectively, "probably inspired by the client. Spanish Colonial and Mediterranean styles were his specialty, what he was known for. This was a departure for Byers." The decision to restore and not raze the house was an aesthetic choice, not an economic one. Landry and Gibson agree: Meaningful restoration is an expensive proposition. "You don't do this to save money," Landry says candidly. "The reality is, when you strip a house down to the studs and add new electrical systems and plumbing and finishes and cabinetry, it's a lot more expensive than just coming in with a bulldozer."

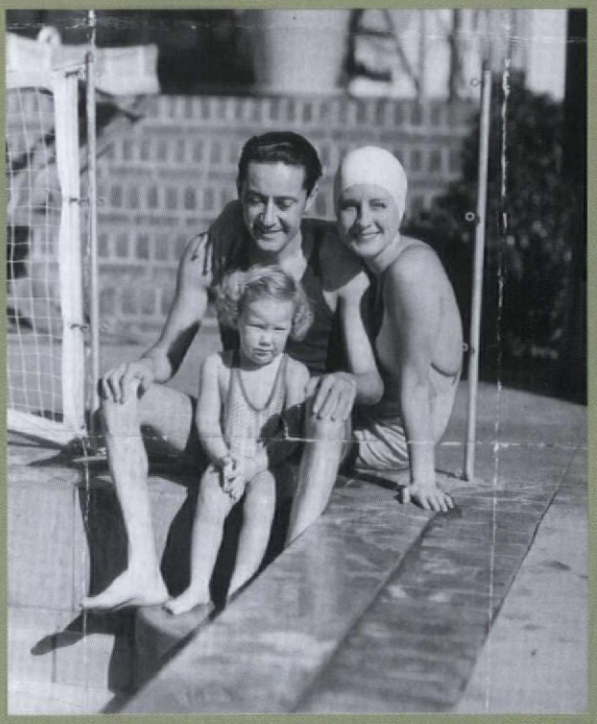
The house was a rather depressing sight at first. "It looked like an empty condo," according to Landry, "very drab and uninspired." Brian Pickett, AIA, the Landry Design Group associate in charge of the project, was more explicit. "The house was very plain, but unkempt. You could tell the previous owners hadn't taken care of it. You could see water damage; you could smell mildew." But the setting was inspiring. "There was something wonderful about the transition from busy Pacific Coast Highway to this English country house, to the beach," says Pickett. "There was a lot of mystery to the house, the way the rooms connected and related to one another, and the darkness of the Tudor style reflected that."

Landry and Gibson embarked on a complete renovation: retrofitting the house to meet new earthquake codes, adding new heat and electrical systems, and reclaiming wasted space. Landry lightened the brooding darkness with a warmer color of stucco and lighter-colored wood for the half-timbered façade; he relandscaped the front of the house, in part to deflect some of the noise from the busy highway. He added window boxes and rustic touches of wood and stone to the exterior, and he replaced the slate roof, adding new copper chimney caps.

"One of the most striking things about this house was its volume," says Landry. "It's rare in L.A. to be able to work with so

At Home with Thalberg and Shearer











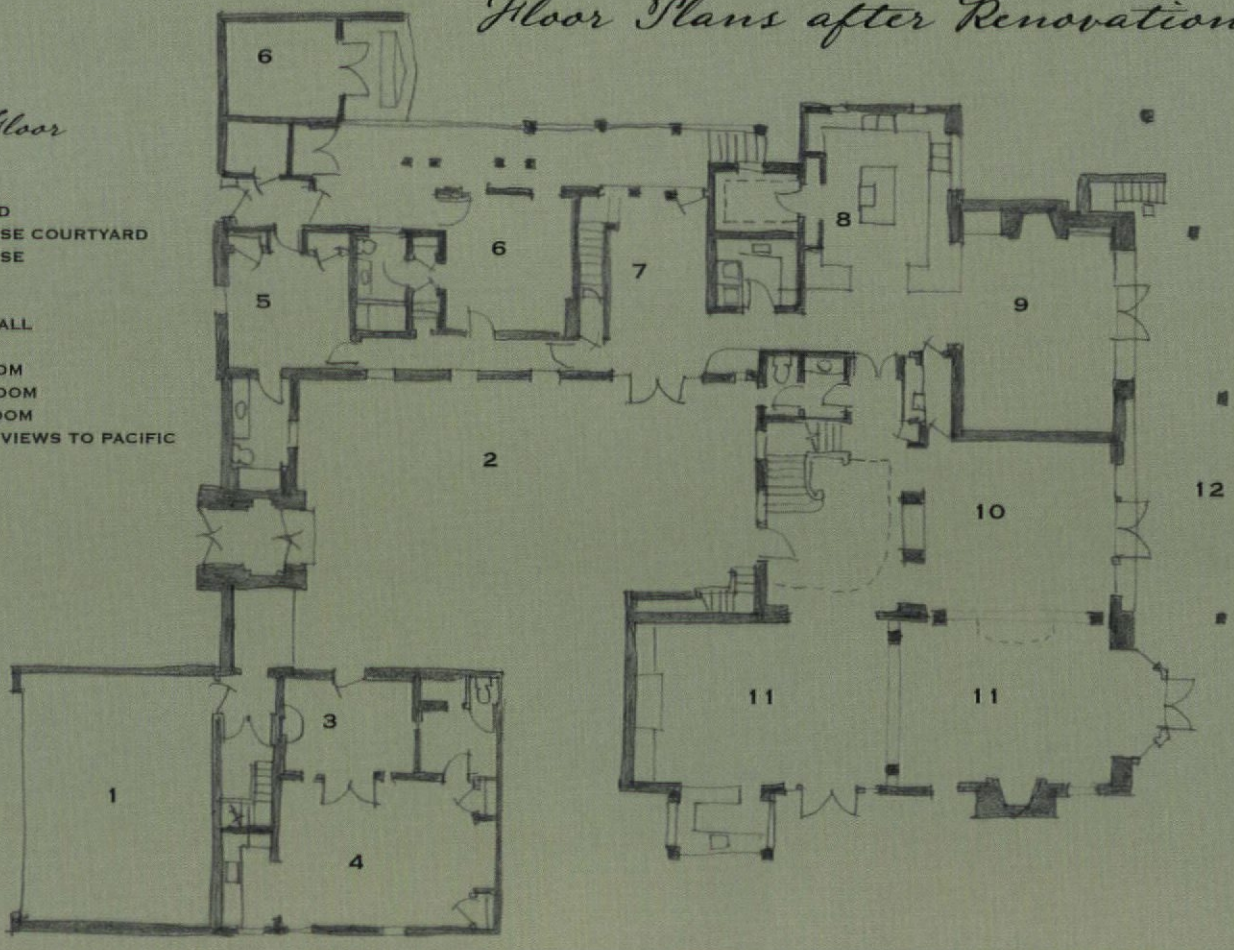
Top left The rear façade of the Irving Thalberg-Norma Shearer home. The house is said to have been built using MGM's set builders. *Middle left* Irving Thalberg and Norma Shearer on the beach at their home. *Bottom left* The original dining room designed by an MGM set designer. *Top right* Norma and Irving poolside with their daughter Katherine. An aerial photo of the Thalberg/Shearer home—complete with private pier.

Landry added dormered balconies and a two-story bay window to the exterior of the house.

Floor Plans after Renovation

First Floor

1 GARAGE
2 COURTYARD
3 GUESTHOUSE COURTYARD
4 GUESTHOUSE
5 BEDROOM
6 STORAGE
7 SERVICE HALL
8 KITCHEN
9 FAMILY ROOM
10 DINING ROOM
11 LIVING ROOM
12 TERRACE VIEWS TO PACIFIC



much height. There was an unfinished attic space that we reclaimed and turned into a retreat for the clients. It's now office space, a reading room, and a clubroom with a pool table. We also took out some of the second floor above the entryway and gave the clients a two-story living room with immense windows."

Landry added details to the stripped-down interior: custom-designed moldings of frolicking cherubs and festooned vines and flowers, themes that he repeated in the hand-carved limestone fireplace in the living room. "The lady of the house loves angels," Landry explains. "The motif pops up again and again." Other restored details include lighted display niches, columns, and wainscotting. Landry made extensive use of recycled wood for ceiling beams and cabinetry, and he used antique doors in several rooms, all to recreate the period ambience. "These clients were wonderful to work with," says Landry. "They entertain a lot, so they wanted to open up the space. They wanted a lot of windows so that they could look out at the ocean, and they wanted the house to be light and open."

Interior designer Karen Blake worked harmoniously with Landry's architectural details. She created a semirustic decor, mixing antiques with contemporary furniture and leaving the distressed pine floors largely bare. Her creamy, neutral palette is perfectly suited to the beach, and the wood finishes add both warmth and depth. "The lady of the house has a Swedish background," says Landry. "She wanted the home to reflect that. It made for an interesting blend with the English Country style of the house." The Swedish influence is seen in whitewashed chairs, Scandinavian antiques, and the delft blue-and-white tile fireplace mantel that Landry designed for the family room.

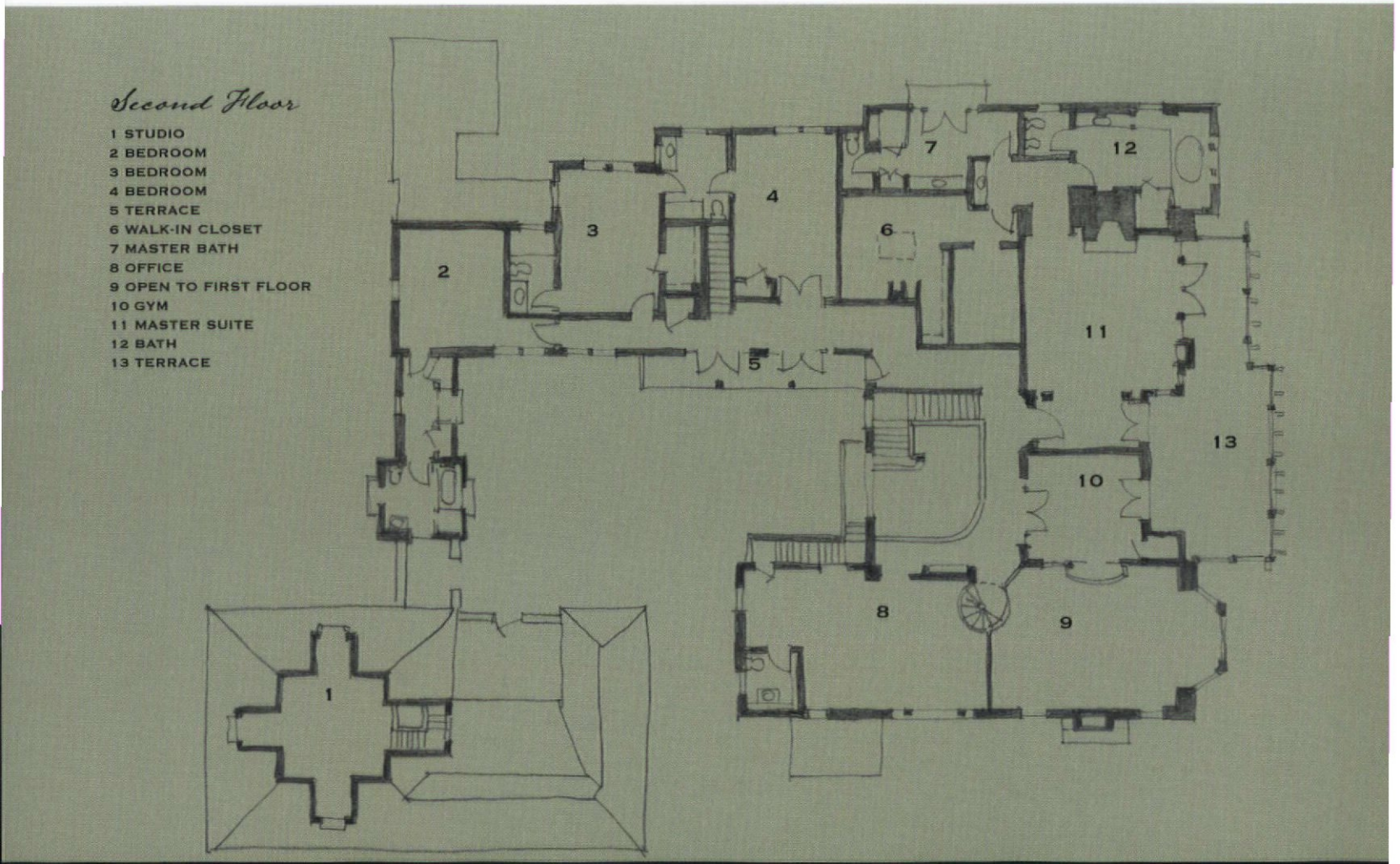
One of the clients is a musician, so Landry converted an unused space above the garage into a studio/rehearsal space. The guest quarters were also expanded to make a complete guesthouse with its own kitchen, bath, and private courtyard.

In the living room, the architects and owners could not resist preserving an eccentric relic of the home's Hollywood past that had miraculously survived the many changes of ownership. "There's a projection screen in the living room," says Pickett. "It's about 7 feet high. It rises out of the floor—you can see all the chains and pulleys that operate it down in the basement. This was one of the very first homes to have a private screening facility, so we kept it."

The clients are delighted with the house—the sequel is better than the original. "The most successful aspect of the project is the clients' happiness," says Landry. "It's everything they wanted in a house, and more. The house feels bright, happy, and open, and they use every part of it." It was an artistically satisfying project for Landry as well. "As an architect, you want to put your clients' needs first. When you undertake a restoration project, you have to be more creative. You have to look beyond the obvious and see something that's begging to be saved. This was an opportunity to save an old soul." NOH

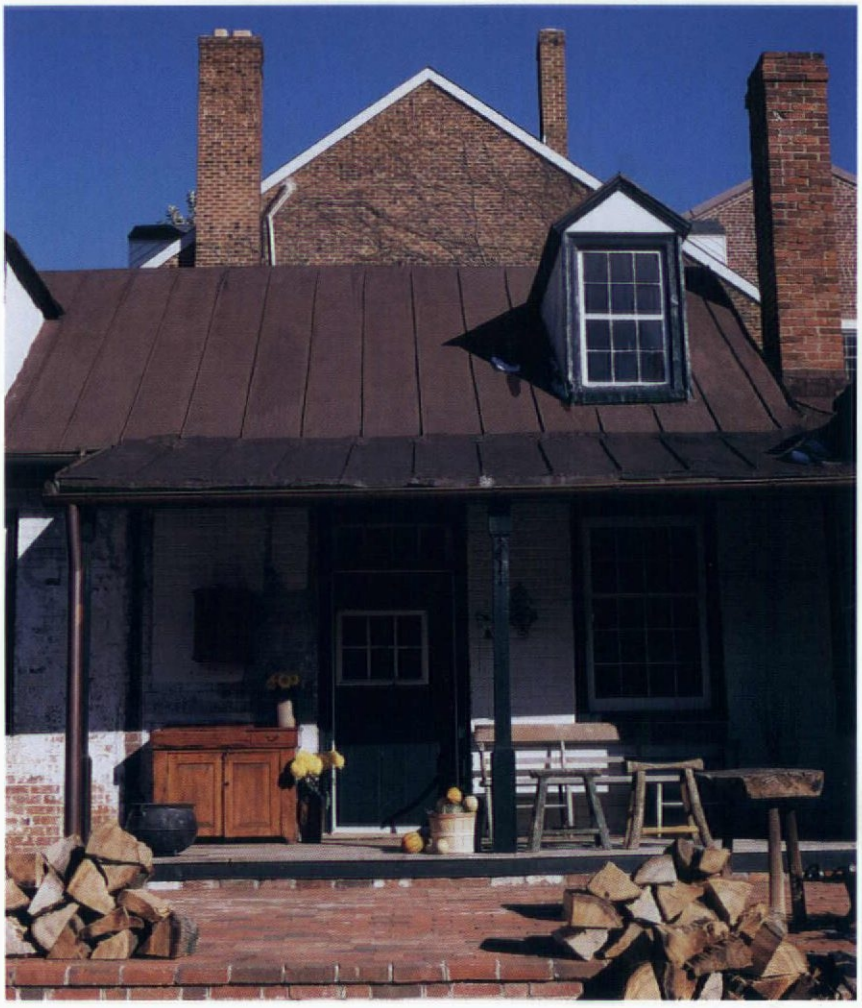
Lynn Morgan, a freelance writer, lives in Los Angeles.

For Resources, see page 102.





Old House Add-On





Franck Lohsen McCrery, Architects design a seamless addition to an ancient house in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia.

TEXT BY MICHAEL TARDIF PHOTOS BY ERIK JOHNSON

Opposite The interior of the new kitchen is faithful to the "architecturally naive" craftsmanship and style of the original colonial-era house, with oversized rafters and plain-sawn, random-width walnut floorboards. The kitchen cabinets are antique dry sinks ganged together, with a continuous maple countertop. The only departure from the original style of the house is the oversized Dutch doors, a concession to the owner's desire to be able to completely open the kitchen to the garden. *Left* Architects James McCrery II, AIA, Michael Franck, AIA, and owner Joe Reeder enjoy a relaxing moment in the kitchen garden. *Above* The porch of the original colonial kitchen, restored to its original appearance.



Wood-framed houses do not survive for very long without a great deal of care, and those that do are often altered beyond recognition over the years. Most fall victim to changing fashions, adverse economic circumstances, or the march of progress. A small number of houses of architectural or historic merit may be restored to their original condition, but often the restoration is an academic exercise in reclaiming a lost past and little of the original structure remains.

From time to time, however, a house will manage to survive in its original form for a very long period. The secret to longevity appears to lie in an existence just outside the social and economic limelight combined with a succession of frugal owners who are careful to keep the water out but who are otherwise content to leave things pretty much as they are.

The Fawcett-Reeder House in Alexandria, Virginia, is one of those houses. Since the 1770s, it has had only five owners, including Joe Reeder, the current owner. "All had a 'let it be attitude,' the single greatest factor in preserving the place," notes James McCrery II, AIA, whose firm, Franck Lohsen McCrery, Architects Inc., restored and renovated the existing house and designed a sensitive kitchen addition.

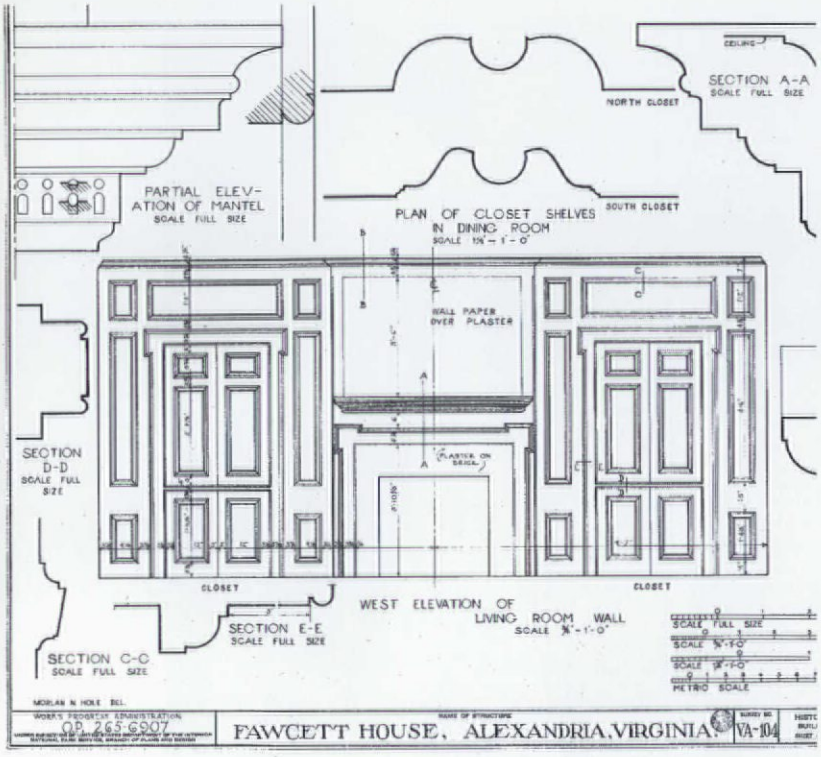
Located in the Alexandria Historic District at the corner of Prince and South St. Asaph Streets, the Fawcett-Reeder House calls little attention to itself despite sitting on a generous corner lot. Even the most careful observer walking up Prince Street from the Potomac River waterfront might walk right past it without realizing what a significant piece of American history it is. But from the corner, with the side of the house in full view, architects Franck Lohsen McCrery carefully peeled away a layer of Victorian-era lap siding to reveal the original broad-plank clapboards of this simple farmhouse. The wide unpainted boards are the first clue that the house might be an unusual specimen of its time. The architects also restored a kitchen porch that faces the corner side yard. Otherwise, the exterior of the house looks much as it has for more than 200 years.

The original structure actually consisted of two buildings. The main house was built as a timber frame with brick nogging and plank clapboard siding. A separate brick building housed the kitchen, an overseer's office, a laundry, and a smokehouse. This was a common arrangement for southern colonial houses. Separating the kitchen from the main house reduced the risk of destruction by fire, and it kept the heat of the kitchen hearth away from the main house during the hot summer months. The kitchen building also featured an ingeniously designed attached privy, with three compartments opening directly to the outside at the rear: one for the master of the house, one for his wife and children, and a third for the slaves. All three compartments shared a single brick-lined septic pit, which was naturally vented through openings in the brick foundation then through a



Above and right Owner Joe Reeder's collection of period artwork, furniture, and furnishings, some of which are original to the house, maintain the colonial-era ambiance. *Opposite* Architects Franck, Lohsen, and McCrery designed new cabinets and bookshelves for the small front parlor. They were built by a framing carpenter using only framing-carpentry tools in order to match the level of craftsmanship of the original millwork. They can be removed without harming the original interior finishes.





its present site at that time, but little more than the absence of tax records supports his theory. He also notes that the house and the brick kitchen building appear to be contemporaneous.

In 1794 a saltbox addition was added to the rear of the house along its entire length, which for the first time provided the family with a separate formal dining room and a "proper" master bedroom away from the street and equipped with its own fireplace. The saltbox filled in the space between the main house and the kitchen building, connecting the two structures for the first time. The windows of the new dining room, on the north side of the house, were likely relocated from the rear wall of the original house. The newly exposed clapboard siding on the north side tells this part of the story beautifully, with the outline of the original house plainly visible.

Sometime after 1810 the saltbox addition was extended laterally to the south, beyond the side wall of the house. The master bedroom fireplace was moved, and an attached master bedroom privy was added. The original street-front entry to the house, which opened directly into the parlor, was removed and replaced with a window. A new formal entry was added on the south side, which had the effect of concealing the otherwise awkward saltbox extension. The interior was further subdivided to create a hallway from the new side entry to the center of the

brick flue that projects through the roof and looks like another chimney. A brick wall divides the privies from the laundry and the smokehouse, ensuring acoustic and olfactory separation. Another brick wall originally partitioned the laundry from the smokehouse so that the heat of the smokehouse could be used to dry the laundry without the smoke permeating the clothes.

The original main house was a typical mid-Atlantic farmhouse of the Georgian period, though it was notably devoid of ornament. McCrery describes the original owner (and presumed builder) as "a farmer aspirant of the middle class." Far from being a gentleman farmer, he was known to have worked in the fields alongside his farmhands and slaves. The house has more in common with the wood-framed hall-and-parlor vernacular farmhouses of colonial tidewater Virginia than it does with the high-style southern Georgian manor homes of the surrounding countryside. On the first floor, the house originally consisted of two rooms of unequal size, a large parlor and a smaller bedroom, with a narrow central stair leading from the rear to two attic bedrooms. The main second floor bedroom features an original coal-grate fireplace, a rarity for its time because coal was an uncommon fuel for heating. A notable departure from the local farmhouse vernacular is the lack of a central hall, another sign of the owner's modest means.

Like many colonial houses, the Fawcett-Reeder residence grew over time, and the complete provenance of the house is unclear. The trail of tax records grows faint before the 1780s, when the house was part of a 700-acre farm just outside the original municipal boundary of Old Town Alexandria. McCrery speculates that the original structure may have been moved to



Above A drawing of the living room's millwork details by the Historic American Buildings Survey. *Right and opposite* The original colonial-era millwork in the large front parlor includes built-in cabinets to either side of the fireplace that have the original shelves and original faux-wood finish on the inside of the cabinet doors.





house. The home then remained virtually unchanged until Reeder purchased it several years ago.

The most remarkable feature of the house is the condition of the interior. All of the original plaster walls as well as the floors, fireplaces, and built-in cabinetry are intact and in excellent condition. The original cabinets to either side of the fireplace in the front parlor boast the original faux wood-grain finish on the inside of the cabinet doors, and they have the original shelves and hardware. The interior walls of the original colonial kitchen, with its massive hearth, are in pristine condition, with no sign of wall attachments or other alterations for later cabinets or appliances. The hearth consists of two fireplaces and two flues in a single firebox, a common eighteenth-century arrangement that allowed for more than one item to be cooked at a time and at different temperatures. The laundry retains its original whitewash finish and—unbelievably—the original wood laundry racks. Like the main house, the second floor of the kitchen building is divided into two rooms of unequal size, which were likely slave quarters. The only alteration that mars the original interior of the kitchen building is a doorway through the wall that once separated the laundry from the smokehouse, which had been converted to a storage shed by a previous owner.

The condition of the interior is even more remarkable when one considers that it is not legally protected from alteration. For Reeder and the architects, the rare condition of the interior, preserved by all previous owners for such a long period of time, was a critical factor in the renovation. No legal obstacle prevented them from building a completely modern kitchen in the existing colonial kitchen, but out of respect for the house and mindful of their role as only temporary stewards of this national treasure, they developed a solution that left the existing colonial kitchen intact. In designing the new addition, the architects took great pains to ensure that no damage would be done to the original structures and that all the new work would be completely reversible. To connect the addition to the existing house, they used two existing exterior door openings, one to enter the master bath from the bedroom and the other to enter the new kitchen from the original kitchen building, in the process creating a tiny interior courtyard that preserved original window openings. The kitchen addition runs parallel to the original kitchen building—a mere 18 inches away—with the gutters of the two buildings barely 1 inch apart. A window in the new kitchen aligns with a window in the old kitchen, creating a view (and admitting light) all the way through the colonial kitchen to the north side of the house.

It took an entire year to obtain the approval of the Board of Zoning Appeals (for a setback variance) and the Board of Architectural Review (for conformance to Historic District



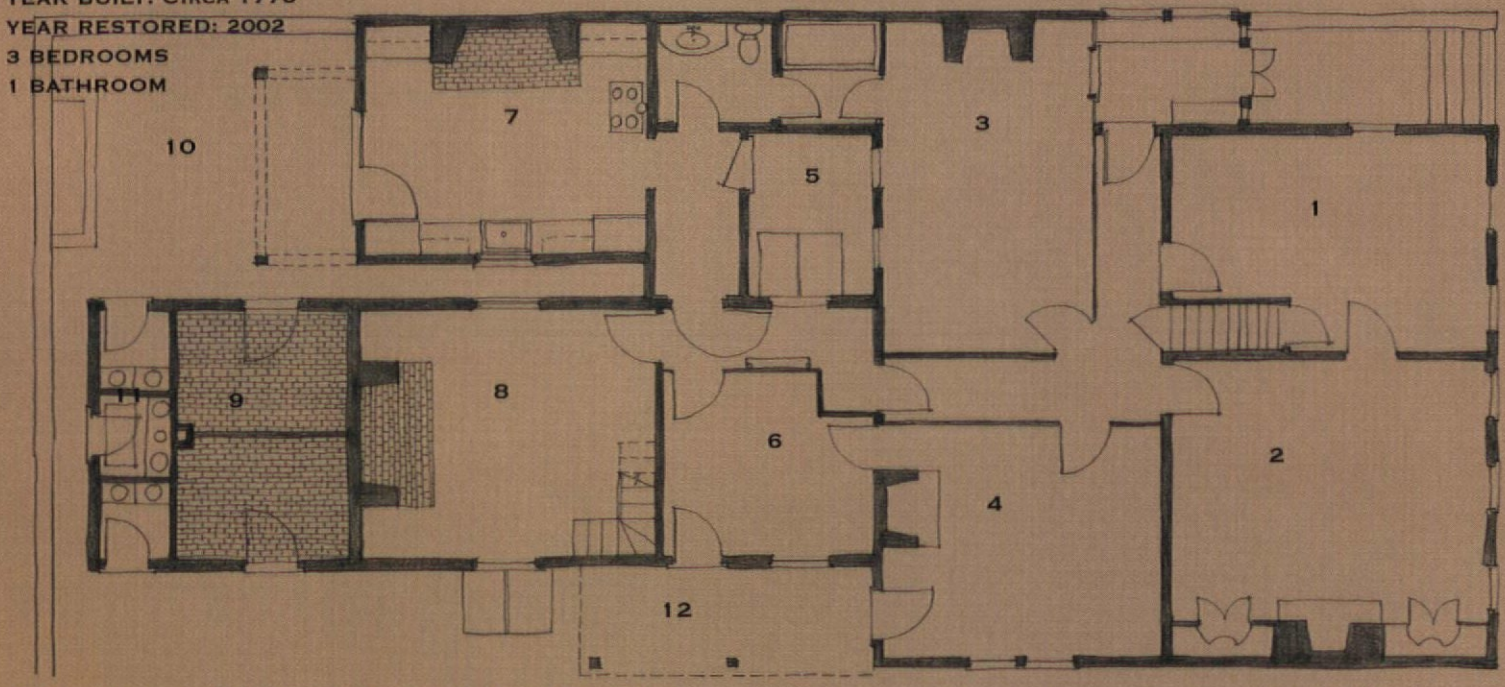
Above The dining room features the current owner's collection of colonial-era china. *Right* Removal of Victorian-era lap siding revealed the original, wide-plank clapboard siding, which starkly illustrates the profile of the original house and the later saltbox addition that connected the house to the originally freestanding kitchen/laundry/smokehouse. *Opposite* The dining room today, looking much as it might have 200 years ago.



Hawcett-Reeder House



RESTORATION ARCHITECTS:
FRANCK LOHSEN MCCRERY
YEAR BUILT: CIRCA 1770
YEAR RESTORED: 2002
3 BEDROOMS
1 BATHROOM



Top The north elevation of the house as it appeared following construction of the saltbox addition, and as it appears today. *Above* Floor plan showing the new kitchen and master bath addition. From upper left, moving left to right, are the kitchen garden, the new kitchen, and the new master bathroom. Note the tiny, fully-enclosed courtyard, and the narrow exterior space between the new kitchen and the original, colonial-era kitchen. This design solution ensured minimal contact between new construction and the original house, and minimal alteration of existing exterior surfaces. None of the new construction is visible from the street, and all of it is fully reversible and removable.

First Floor

1 LIBRARY
2 LIVING ROOM
3 MASTER BEDROOM
4 DINING ROOM
5 COURTYARD
6 GUEST ROOM
7 NEW KITCHEN
8 ORIGINAL KITCHEN
9 SMOKE HOUSE/LAUNDRY
10 KITCHEN GARDEN
11 PRIVY
12 SIDE PORCH



restrictions), which McCrery cites as "testimony of their great care." The authorities were ultimately persuaded by the strategy of building new in order to preserve the old. "The Board of Architectural Review has no jurisdiction over the original interior," says McCrery. "We essentially invited them to have jurisdiction." It also helped that owner Reeder and McCrery's firm had done several previous projects in Alexandria; as McCrery notes, "Our firm has an explicit commitment to traditional architecture. We do nothing else."

In designing the new addition, the architects drew inspiration from the original house. In keeping with the workaday craftsmanship of the original, the new kitchen is "architecturally naïve," with a large oversized dormer and what McCrery calls an "overstructured roof, because in colonial times it took less effort to make a big piece of wood than a smaller one." The timber frame was assembled with peg joinery, and the whole addition was sheathed with random-width planks. The floor is random-width, plain-sawn walnut, in keeping with the plain-sawn pine floorboards of the original house. The kitchen fireplace chimney is stepped, a nod to eighteenth-century practice when brick was an expensive building material. The new kitchen also features a pair of Dutch doors beneath a deeply overhanging roof, which McCrery readily acknowledges as "a complete invention pinned to the owner's desire to open the kitchen to the garden." The kitchen "cabinetry" is actually a series of old reclaimed dry sinks with a maple countertop.

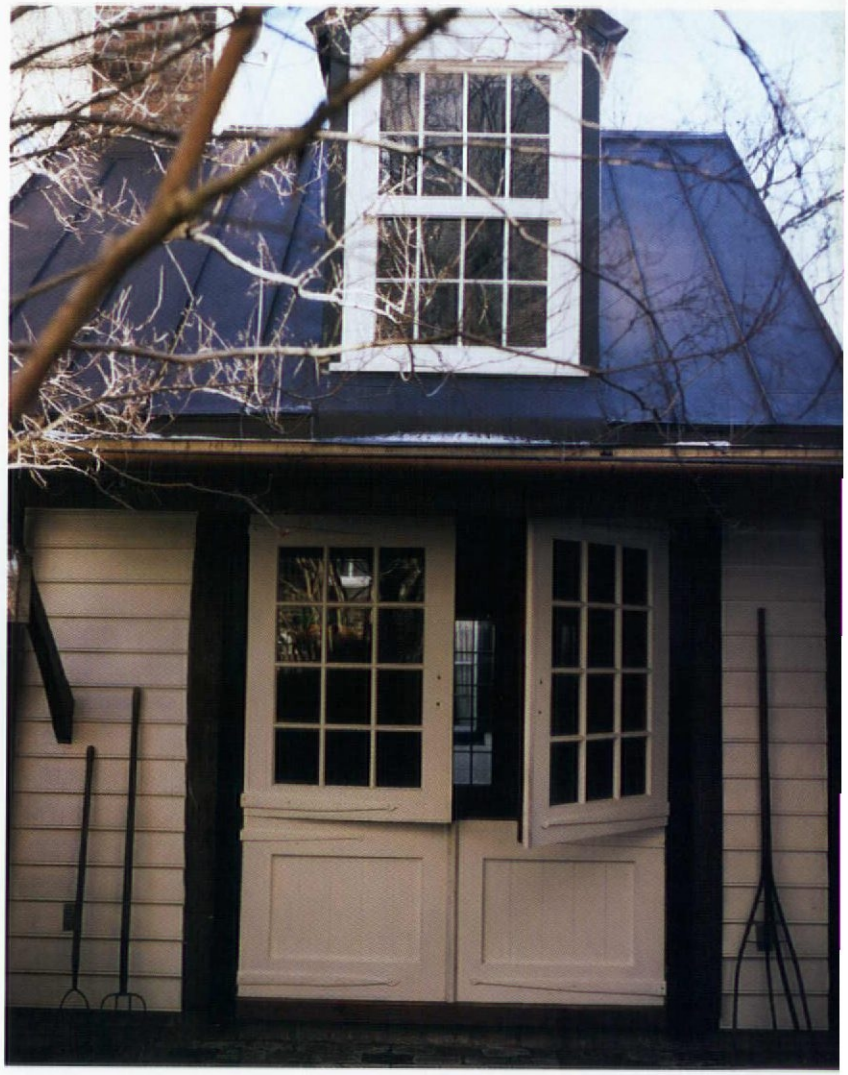
Other than the restoration of the kitchen porch and the uncovering of the original clapboard siding, the original house has received only the lightest touch. The pine floors, which had been painted black, were stripped and restored to their original natural finish. Reeder wished to furnish the smaller front parlor as a library, so the architects designed new cabinets and shelves along the front wall to be easily removed without damage to the original interior finishes. So as not to upstage the original colonial millwork, the new library cabinets have a "comparative commonness" with the rest of the house. Rather than hiring a finish carpenter, the architects hired a framing carpenter and instructed him to do the best job he could using only the tools of his own trade.

The Fawcett-Reeder House has been fortunate to have Reeder as its most recent steward. A former Marine, he is an avid collector of historical artwork, artifacts, and furnishings—and houses. As McCrery describes him, "He loves history and feels that he is a part of it. There is no limit to his degree of interest in doing justice to the property. He seeks and finds the right way to do things."

The house has been no less fortunate to have Franck Lohsen McCrery as its architects; they see themselves as part of history, too. McCrery muses, "We could spend all of our time designing new buildings. And we hope that 100 years from now, someone will take care of our work, so we like to spend at least part of our time taking care of the buildings of others." NOH

Michael Tardif, a freelance writer, lives in Bethesda, Maryland.

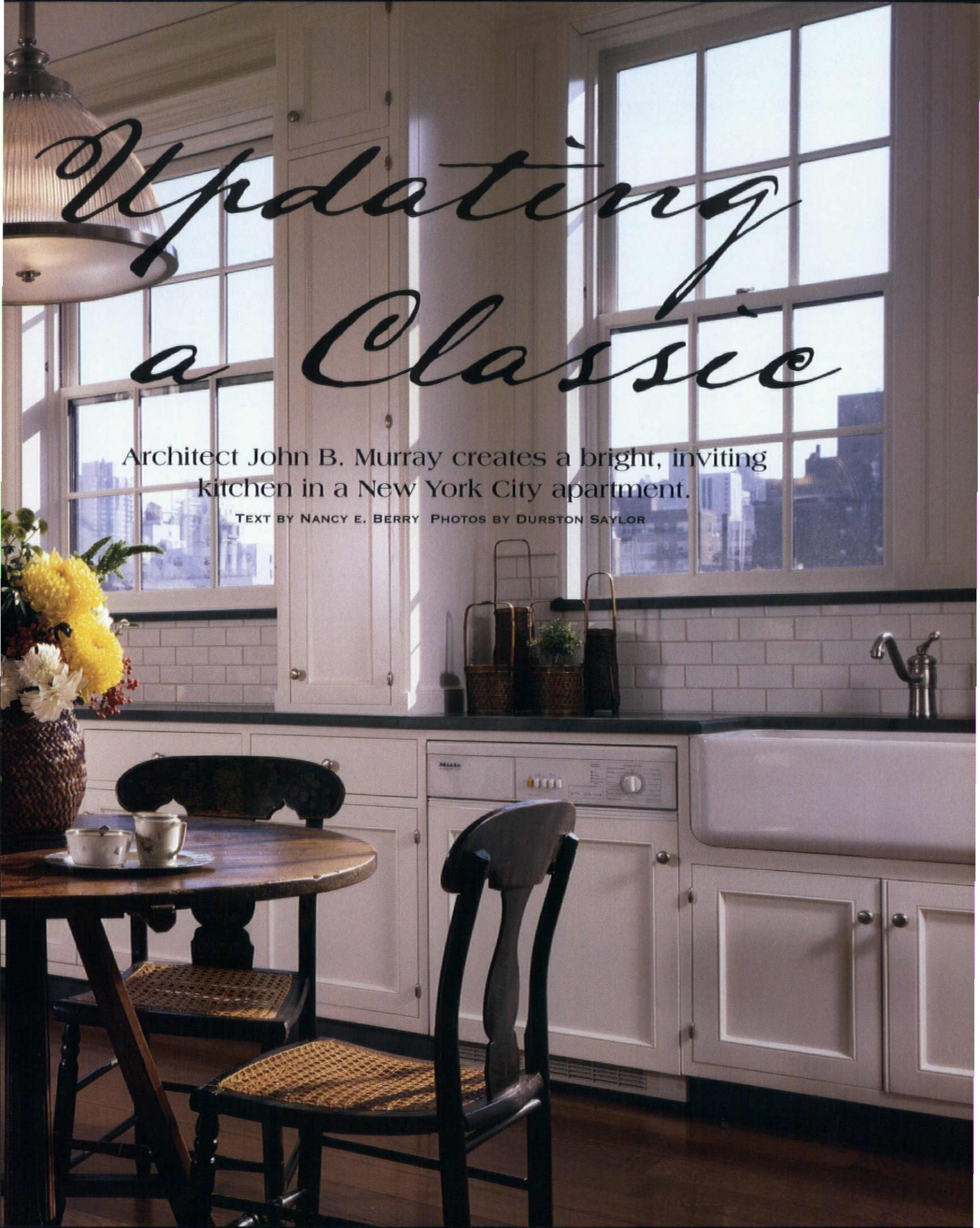
For Resources, see page 102.



Above A dry sink in front of the window of the original colonial kitchen, which is aligned with a window in the new kitchen, a mere 18 inches beyond. *Right* An exterior view of the new kitchen from the kitchen garden, showing the oversized dormer window and the barn-size Dutch doors. In good weather, the garden and kitchen become one big open room.



John B. Murray renovated the kitchen and servant's quarters in a 1927 New York City apartment originally designed by Rosario Candela. The space had been remodeled in the early 1970s and lost much of its original features at that time. Murray created a new kitchen that is functional as well as charming.

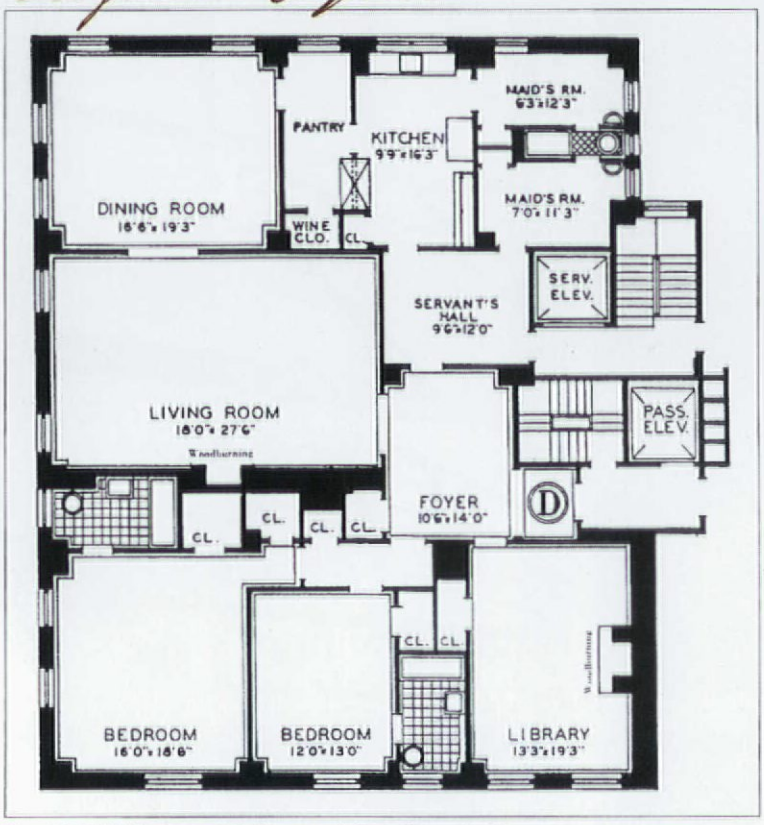


Updating a Classic

Architect John B. Murray creates a bright, inviting kitchen in a New York City apartment.

TEXT BY NANCY E. BERRY PHOTOS BY DURSTON SAYLOR

Original Layout

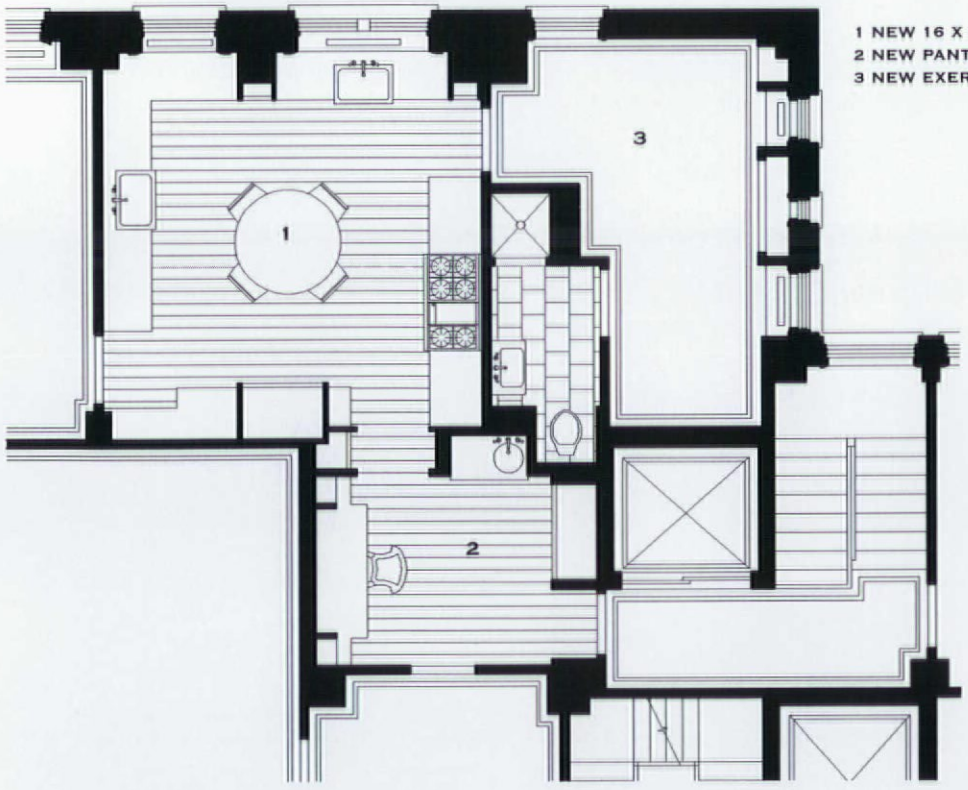


Public vs. Private

"Thoughtful, innovative designs for their time these glamorous apartments served New York City's wealthy. Most of Candela's buildings started with the same skeleton three big entertainment rooms organized off a central foyer with a staircase or hall leading to bedrooms and beyond multiple servant's quarters. Proper distance was provided between the library and living room to allow two members of the family to entertain at once. The building had private laundry rooms in the basement for each family's laundress." An excerpt from *The New York Apartment Houses of Rosario Candela and James Carpenter* by Andrew Alpern.

Candela's original floor plan shows the division in the apartment of public and private spaces. This separation was of utmost importance to Candela when he was designing these luxurious living spaces.

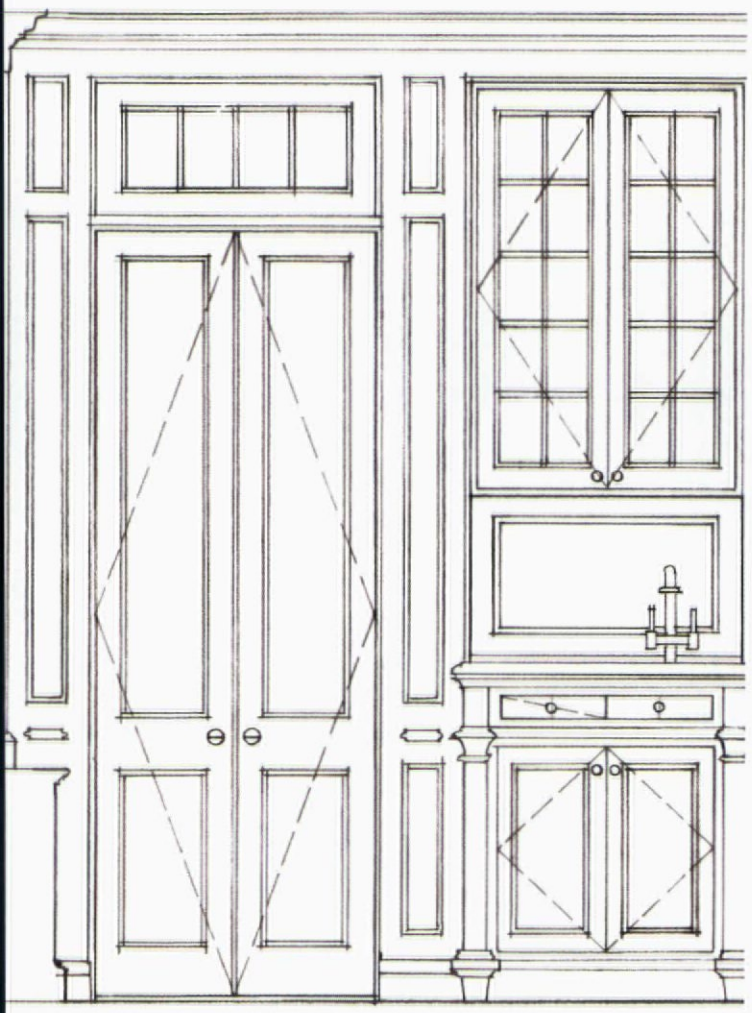
Renovated Space



1 NEW 16 X 16 FOOT KITCHEN
2 NEW PANTRY
3 NEW EXERCISE ROOM



Left John B. Murray Architect renovated the kitchen, pantry, servants' hall, and servants' bedrooms into a kitchen, study and exercise room. Opposite Murray created every aspect of the new spaces, including the pantry.





In the 1920s, Italian-born architect Rosario Candela was designing luxurious apartment buildings for New York City's elite. The apartments ranged from 8 to 15 rooms, each typically with three formal entertaining spaces—a library, a dining room, and a living room, complete with wood-burning fireplaces—off a central foyer. Dreamy, spacious bedrooms with private baths were distanced from these public areas by long hallways. The servants' wing, a small cluster of utilitarian rooms comprising the kitchen, servants' hall, linen room, butler's pantry, and modest sleeping chambers, was tucked behind the scenes. One of Candela's primary considerations when designing these apartments was privacy—segregating the public and the private.

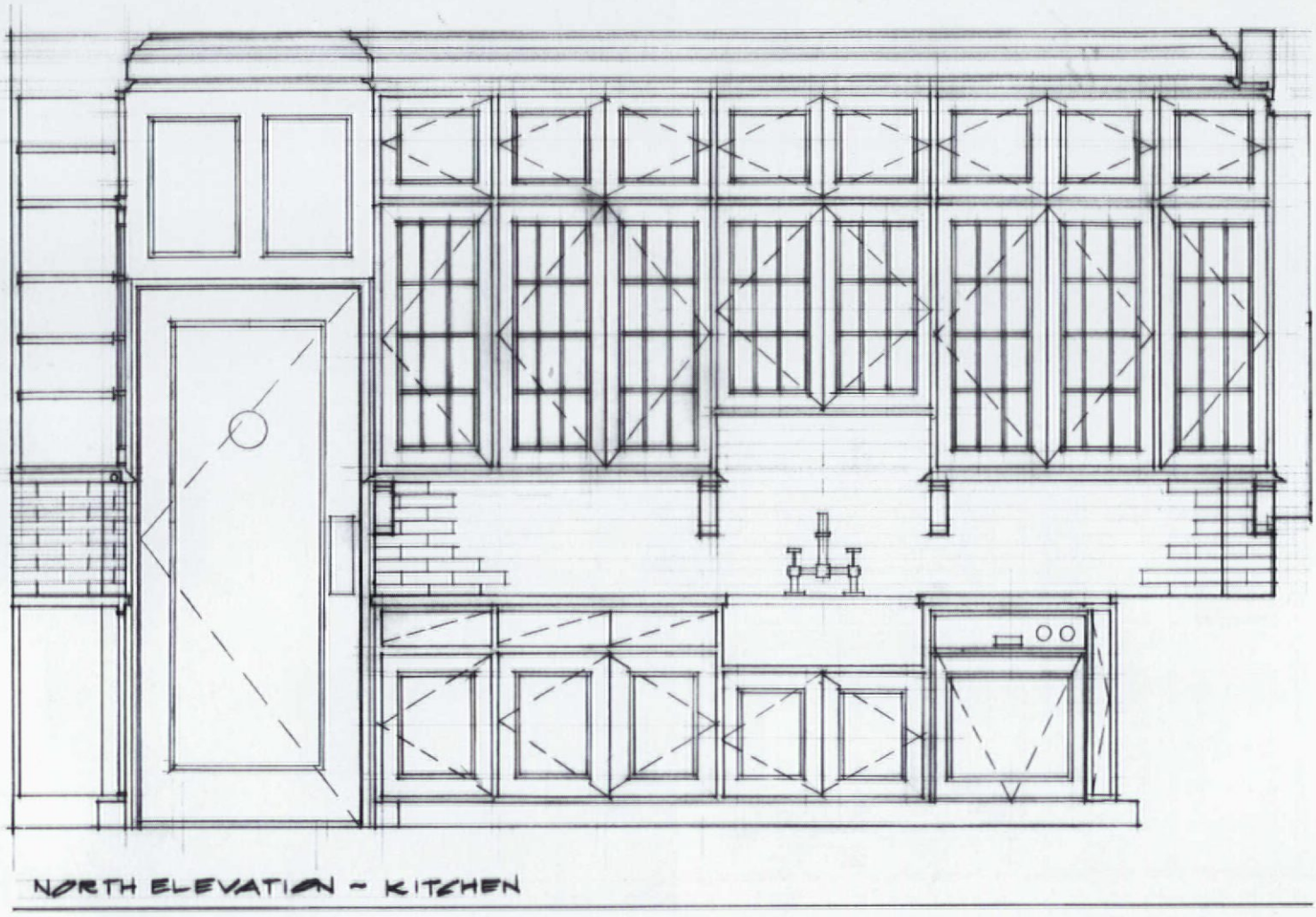
Today, all of Candela's extant apartment buildings are highly prized for their lavish entertaining rooms, timeless interiors, and excellent addresses. The one area that has become archaic in these 80-plus-year-old apartments is the servants' and service rooms. These cramped "private" spaces don't offer the openness, comfort, and utility desired in today's living environments. John B. Murray, principal of John B. Murray Architect, LLC, a New York-based firm, was charged with re-creating these obsolete spaces for his client's modern lifestyle while keeping Candela's basic principle of privacy intact.

"We needed to refresh that quadrant of the apartment," says Murray. "Originally there were two staff rooms, a kitchen, a pantry, and a servants' hall." The homeowners wanted to renovate these spaces, which had been updated once in the 1970s (complete with avocado-colored appliances and drop acoustical tile ceilings), into functional rooms that melded with the aesthetics of the rest of the apartment. They wanted spaces where they could cook evening meals, read the morning paper over coffee, and, most of all, relax.

Starting Over

Murray came up with a design that would reallocate the volume of space into three areas as opposed to the existing five. Murray first discovered that there was an extra 2 feet 3 inches under the drop ceilings, bringing the height of the rooms to their original 10 feet 3 inches. Murray then gutted the rooms of their 1970s attire, removed the wall between the original pantry and kitchen (creating one 16 foot by 16 foot space), and combined the two servants' chambers into one room to be used as an exercise space. The servants' hall (adjacent to the kitchen) became a multipurpose room: an office, a bar, and a storage room for china and linens—much like a butler's pantry.

Once the rooms were reappointed and ceilings and walls reconfigured, the kitchen design could begin to take shape. "We worked with a millwork unit concept—from cornice to floor," says Murray, who wanted to tie the newly created spaces together visually through the millwork design. Above-counter cabinets are glass-paned with true divided lites, while under-



counter cabinets and drawers have understated flat panel fronts, resembling pantry cabinets of the early twentieth century. The cabinetry, which reaches to the ceiling, accentuates the restored height of the room. "The space feels clean; there's no disconnect," says Murray. "The rooms are also engaged with the architecture of the rest of the apartment."

One important design factor was to create ample storage—a modern-day necessity often lacking in older structures. Murray wasted no space when it came to building in nooks and crannies. Along with loads of kitchen cabinets, the door jambs between the kitchen and pantry also offer storage. Murray encased a structural column in the kitchen with millwork, which allows for a 6-inch-deep spice rack.

Design Details

Subtle details in the kitchen add the finishing touches to the room's aesthetics. Countertops are made of Elterwater volcanic stone, a nonporous rock that makes a great work surface. The stone is carried into the toekick and bar area, which further ties the design together. The backsplash is made of 2 1/2-inch by 5-inch white tiles. "These tiles are a bit smaller than the standard 3-inch by 6-inch subway tiles, but they offer a better sense of scale in the room," says Murray. Antique glass was used in the cabinet doors. For ambient light, Murray added a central hanging holophane lamp, with smaller versions placed in the four corners of the kitchen. Incandescent task lighting hides under the cabinets. All the hardware throughout is satin brush nickel, creating cohesiveness in the design. The new cabinets' olive-knuckle hinges echo hinges found in the original design of the apartment. Floorboards are random-cut widths of white oak. Murray replaced the original windows with counter-weight replicas crafted by Woodstone Company in Vermont. Motorized window shades diffuse early morning light. Stainless-steel appliances, including a 48-inch range, add a cool contrast to the wood cabinets. Interior designer Jane Gould found an antique round table for the room's centerpiece, which adds additional warmth to the space. Today the homeowners are thrilled with the renovation. "They live in the kitchen," says Murray.

"Traditional architecture finds a common thread in the design that looks and feels natural and relates to the context of the site, as found in the Candela building," says Murray, whose commitment to good design, attention to detail, and craftsmanship while maintaining public and private spaces pays homage to Candela's architecture. Murray successfully preserved the integrity of this classic New York apartment while enhancing it for twenty-first century living. NOH

For Resources, see page 102.

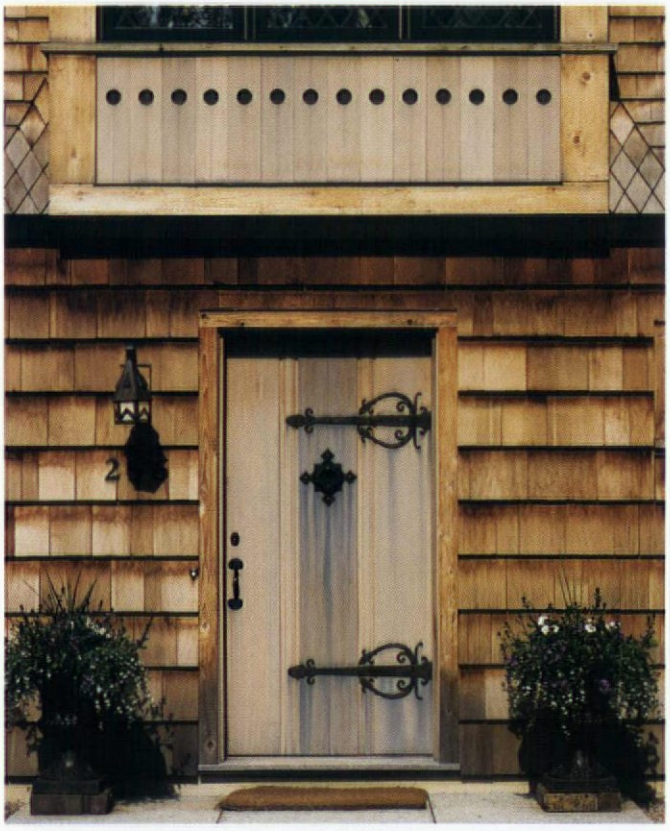


Left A detailed rendering of the north elevation of the new kitchen (originally the butler's pantry). *This page* The new kitchen, separated from the main apartment's living quarters, remains a private spot for the homeowners to relax and read the morning paper. Antique glass is found in the upper cabinets.



The design of Charlie Hayes's Arts and Crafts-inspired home blends historic features, modern necessities, and an appreciation for craftsmanship. The custom-made leaded glass panes, by Studio B Stained Glass in Dallas, are inset into standard double-paned Marvin windows, so beauty isn't compromised by energy efficiency.

English



Arts and Crafts

TEXT BY J. ROBERT OSTERGAARD PHOTOS BY JAMES YOCHUM

Sandra Vitzthum designs a new old house in Michigan well suited for her client's collection of antiques.



If I were asked to say what is at once the most important production of art and the thing most to be longed for, I should answer, a beautiful house.

When William Morris wrote these words in 1892, it was in his native England and Queen Victoria was on the throne. Over a century later and half a world away—on the eastern shore of Lake Michigan—Sandra Vitzthum, AIA, and her client, Charlie Hayes, took to heart Morris's words and embraced the essential philosophy of the Arts and Crafts Movement that he founded. The result is a new old house that blends contemporary sensibilities and necessities with a historic sensitivity and an appreciation of time-honored craftsmanship.

English Arts and Crafts was a design revolution that began in the late nineteenth century and was promulgated by visionary tastemakers: William Morris, Philip Webb, Edwin Lutyens, and C.F.A. Voysey, among others. It was a reformist movement that grew out of its adherents' distaste for inauthentic, overwrought, and mass-produced Victorian design. The Industrial Revolution gave the Victorians plenty of shoddy, gaudy, factory-made goods and architectural embellishments, but—in the opinion of the Arts and Crafts founders—it failed to improve the character of individuals or of English society. Webb and many of his contemporaries set out to change that.

Part of the remedy, they argued, was to reintroduce humans into the design process in the form of skilled craftsmen working closely with enlightened architects, designers, and homeowners. Morris believed that successful design derived from a knowledge of and appreciation for all the elements that make up a home and a passion for the handicraft that produces it. Anything that did not bear the authentic mark of human hands was eschewed, and all design elements were selected to work in concert celebrating the natural and useful properties of a home. Or, as Vitzthum succinctly puts it, "It's all about the nature of the materials and the simplicity and clarity of intention."



This is the house of a collector, so display areas abound. In the dining room, the high wainscotting is topped by a plate rail. It was based on a similar detail found in the historic home of the late Swedish artist Carl Larsson.

Carriage House Classic

For Hayes's house, Vitzthum created a structure reminiscent of an early twentieth-century carriage house—a suitable choice as Hayes stores his collection of English racing cars here. Its exterior is notable for its integrity, unity, and completeness in the massing of forms. Three dormers above and two garages flanking the ground floor lend balance, and the regular placement of leaded glass windows, including a central bay window, strengthens the conceit. The few ornamental flourishes are logical outgrowths of the overall plan. The first floor



Right Vitzthum created the kitchen as the back wall of the dining room (left) to accommodate Hayes's request that the two rooms be combined for ease of entertaining. Lights in both rooms are reproductions from Conant Custom Brass and are re-created from a Catskills porch light. The sideboard is a Stickley piece, and the dining room table was designed by the owner.


ANTIQUES



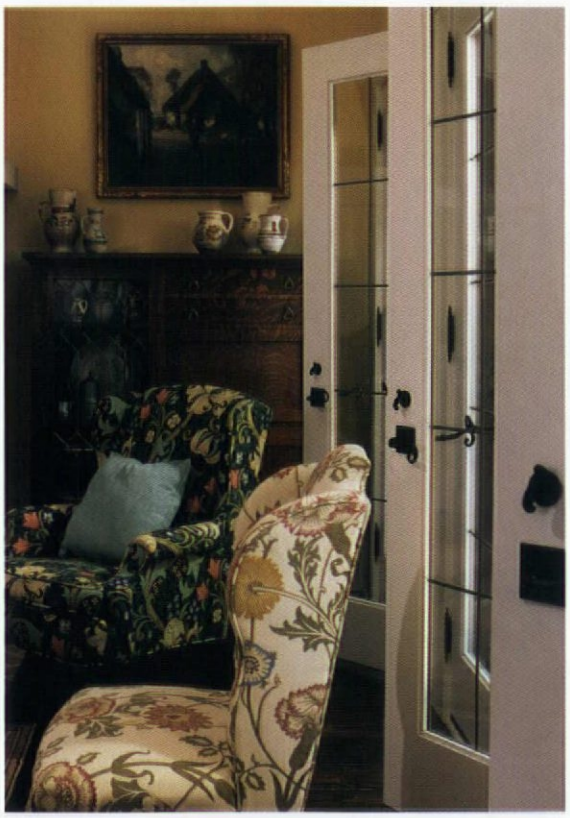
is sheathed in a double course of cedar shingles, with the top course protruding slightly over the course below, giving a strong shadow line and grounding the house. The diamond course skirt delineates the second story, and the single course of shingles above gives a finer finish as well as a sense of lightness that contrasts to the rusticated ground floor. No doubt Morris would have approved of Vitzthum's clever use of natural, regionally appropriate materials.

Inspired Style

"On entering, the visitor encounters a small, intentionally dark entry hall. It's a place of rest and also of transition. It's supposed to be cool and restful after being outside," Vitzthum says. "You arrive and relax and then climb the stairs." The staircase is perhaps the most important interior architectural detail. It was designed by Vitzthum, handmade by Bruce LaRose of Custom Millwork in Barre, Vermont, and inspired by the stairs at Red House, the home Philip Webb designed for Morris in 1859. Like the spires of a cathedral illuminated by light filtering down from above, the hand-turned newel posts beckon the eye and the visitor upwards. "The overall organization of the house is very vertical," Vitzthum says. This is not an idle notion, but a practical decision. "The main living areas are upstairs, in part because this is a lakefront home," Vitzthum explains, "so the views improve as you ascend."

The second floor is in the tradition of the *piano nobile*, the floor where the main reception rooms and primary bedrooms are located. In this case, the main staircase leads up into the two-story library. By bringing visitors into this room first, Vitzthum activates the space. "It seemed fitting to think of this room in the English sense of a hall: a room that can be used for sitting and talking, and of course, storing books," she says. This is the home of a collector, Vitzthum notes, so she created a broad plate rail around the room to display Hayes's collection of terra-cotta and antique Romanian pottery. The windows are inset with early twentieth-century stained-glass medallions from Hayes's collection.

The adjacent living room is dominated by a 5-foot-high granite fireplace, an apt adornment considering the home's pronounced verticality. It also speaks to the hearth as the metaphorical and physical center of the home, Vitzthum explains, just as Morris would have advocated. The plate rail reappears here, albeit in a smaller scale. The staircase also reappears, but as an overhead balcony that can be reached only through a "hidden staircase" off the library. It reinforces the Arts and



Left and Above The voluptuous fireplace was made from Indiana limestone and designed and constructed with the assistance of the International Masonry Institute. The fire screen was handcrafted of bronze and iron and is flanked by late-nineteenth-century Bradley Hubbard andirons. Its grand scale and placement speak to the hearth as the center of the home. The living room floors are southern yellow pine covered by "Wightwick Manor," a Morris & Co. rug reproduced by Michael FitzSimmons Decorative Arts.



Crafts design motif while reminding us of the demarcation between public and private interior spaces. The library is separated from the living room by a dividing wall, but Vitzthum opened it at the upper story and designed arched colonnettes to span the opening. In this way, the very modern idea of an open interior space is incorporated into a historically sensitive plan.



Left and Above A guest room in Charlie Hayes's home is decorated with reproduction William Morris wallpaper and early twentieth-century antiques. Vitzthum incorporated a closet into the space.

Modern Elements

Another example of modern ideas being interpreted in a traditional context is the combination dining room and kitchen. Like many homeowners today, Hayes appreciates being able to prepare a meal while partaking of the company of his dinner guests. Therefore, he asked for minimal separation between the formal dining area and the food-preparation area. Vitzthum accomplished this by making the kitchen the dining room's back wall. A custom-designed granite-topped island serves as the dividing line between the two. A plate rail over the dining room's high wainscotting was another opportunity to display pieces from Hayes's many collections. For furnishings, Hayes chose pieces from his Stickley collection and—taking a tip perhaps from Morris—he designed the dining room table himself. Indeed, touring this new old house, it is clear that both owner and architect agree with another Morris proverb: "The secret of happiness lies in taking a genuine interest in all the details of daily life, and in elevating them to art." NOH

J. Robert Ostergaard is a freelance writer and editor as well as a lover of all things Arts and Crafts. He lives in New York City.

For Resources, see page 102.

Historical Reference

Sandra Vitzthum drew inspiration for the Hayes Cottage from many progenitors of the English Arts and Crafts Movement, in particular architect Edwin Luytens. Born in London in 1869, Luytens based his designs on historical references within a local context both in terms of materials and building traditions—tenets of the Arts and Crafts philosophy. He designed Goddards in 1898–1900, and it is considered one of his best early houses. Vitzthum borrowed ideas from the common room's fireplace (right) with its brick arches, keystone, and stone corbelling for the family room fireplace at the Hayes Cottage.



COURTESY OF ALLAN SOEDRING/WWW.ASOFT.CO.UK/GODDARDS

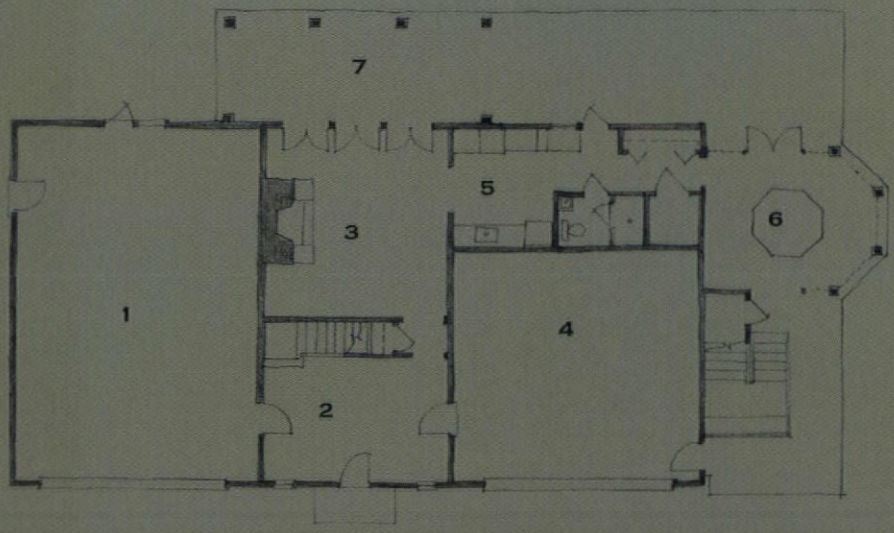
Hayes Residence



ARCHITECT SANDRA VITZTHUM
BEDROOMS: 3
BATHROOMS: 3

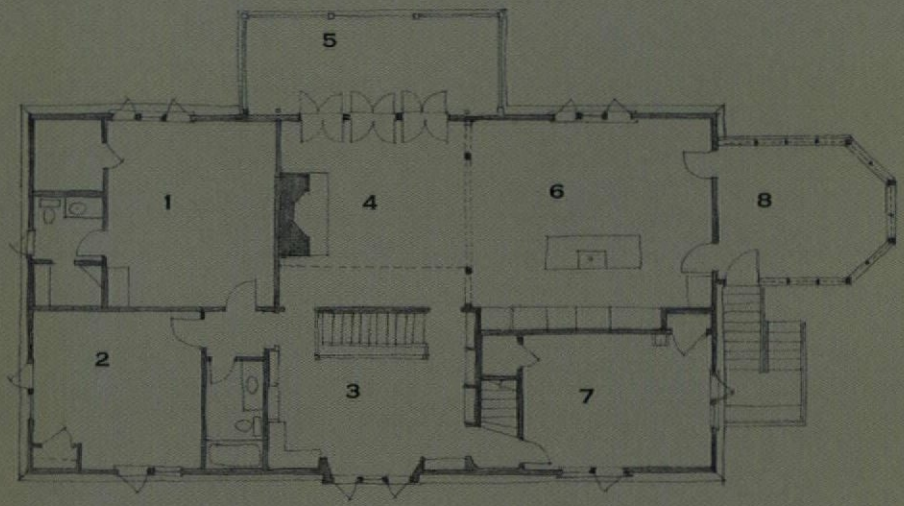
First Floor

1 GARAGE
2 ENTRY HALL
3 FAMILY ROOM
4 GARAGE
5 BACK HALL
6 SCREENED PORCH
7 DECK



Second Floor

1 MASTER BEDROOM
2 BEDROOM
3 LIBRARY
4 LIVING ROOM
5 DECK
6 DINING ROOM/KITCHEN
7 BEDROOM
8 SCREENED PORCH







Above The garage doors were fabricated by the LaRose family of Custom Millwork in Barre, Vermont. The circular detail in the bay window establishes a decorative theme employed in the home's interior staircase. *Left* Rather than a grand entrance, Vitzthum envisioned a small, restful entry room where the visitor transitions gently from the public into the private realm. The walls are covered in "Compton" wallpaper designed by William Morris and supplied—along with many of the period furnishings—by Michael FitzSimmons Decorative Arts in Chicago.



Bedroom Built-ins

Creating serene sleeping quarters is made easier when built-in shelves and drawers help reduce clutter in cozy spaces.

TEXT BY ELIZABETH DOWNEY PHOTOS BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK

Quite often, the lack of storage space—especially in the bedroom—is an issue in older houses. Today, traditional architects designing new houses have remedied this shortcoming in home design. In fact, one request architects receive over and over from their clients is to design a space with lots of storage, particularly built-ins. The idea of the built-in is a fairly new concept in the history of house building. At the turn of the twentieth century, built-in cabinets, drawers, and shelves were widely introduced into Shingle-, Colonial Revival-, and Craftsman-style houses. An innovative way to maximize the interior design while creating space-saving efficiency, built-ins also offered a more hygienic approach to room design by omitting furniture legs where dirt and dust could hide. Bedrooms of the early 1900s received closets with built-in drawers, built-in vanity dressers, even Murphy beds, which folded right into the wall when square footage was minimal.

Although the built-in trend lost momentum midcentury, architects are reviving these clever storage solutions into new old houses today. We'll peek into four dreamy bedroom designs that solve the problem of storage, maximize space, and create a serene uncluttered spot for catching some zzz's.

Rustic Retreat

Architect Stephen Blatt designed this cozy bedroom as part of a new old house on Maine's coast. "The house design was limited to the small footprint of an existing cabin that had been struck by lightning and burned to the ground. So we tucked the 10-foot by 14-foot bedroom up under the steeply pitched roof," says Blatt. The unused space under the eaves on both sides of the room was the perfect spot to add built-in drawers. Blatt designed drawers into the kneewall that get progressively deeper as you go down to the floor, following the roofline. At a dormered window Blatt incorporated a built-in bookshelf. Blatt also included built-in speakers in this new old bedroom.

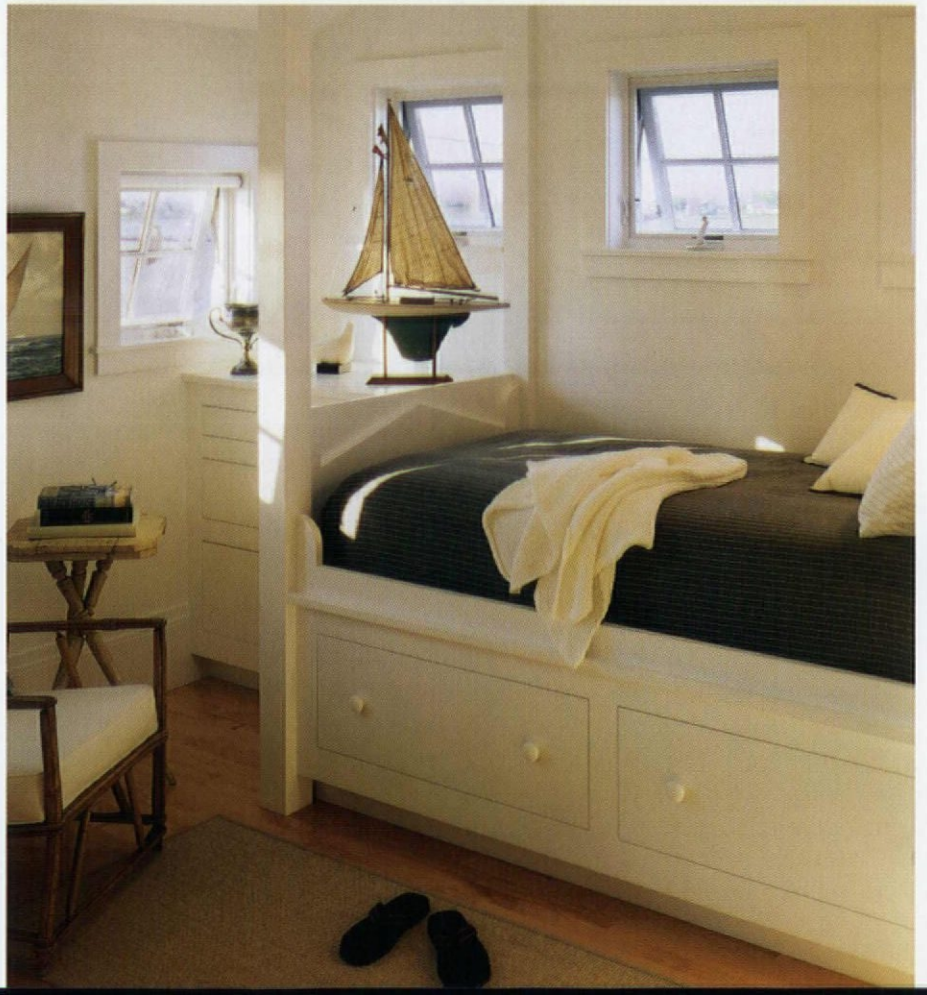


Creative Cabinet

During an extensive country house restoration, the homeowners didn't have the option of adding closets into this bedroom because of an existing exterior masonry wall. To solve the problem of lack of storage space, they approached a cabinetmaker to build a historically inspired armoire for the bedroom. The box-paneled molding on the doors echoes the box molding ceiling. Wrought-iron strap hinges and a cupboard clasp add a rustic look to the old-fashioned wardrobe.

Close Quarters

The design of the tiny guest room in a Biddeford Pool, Maine, weekend retreat takes its direction from a ship's cabin. The twin bed, with two large trundle drawers tucked underneath the mattress, is built into the wall of the room. The drawers are 4-feet deep, offering ample storage. A small bedstand was also built into the cozy space. Views of the water from the awning windows complete the seafaring theme.





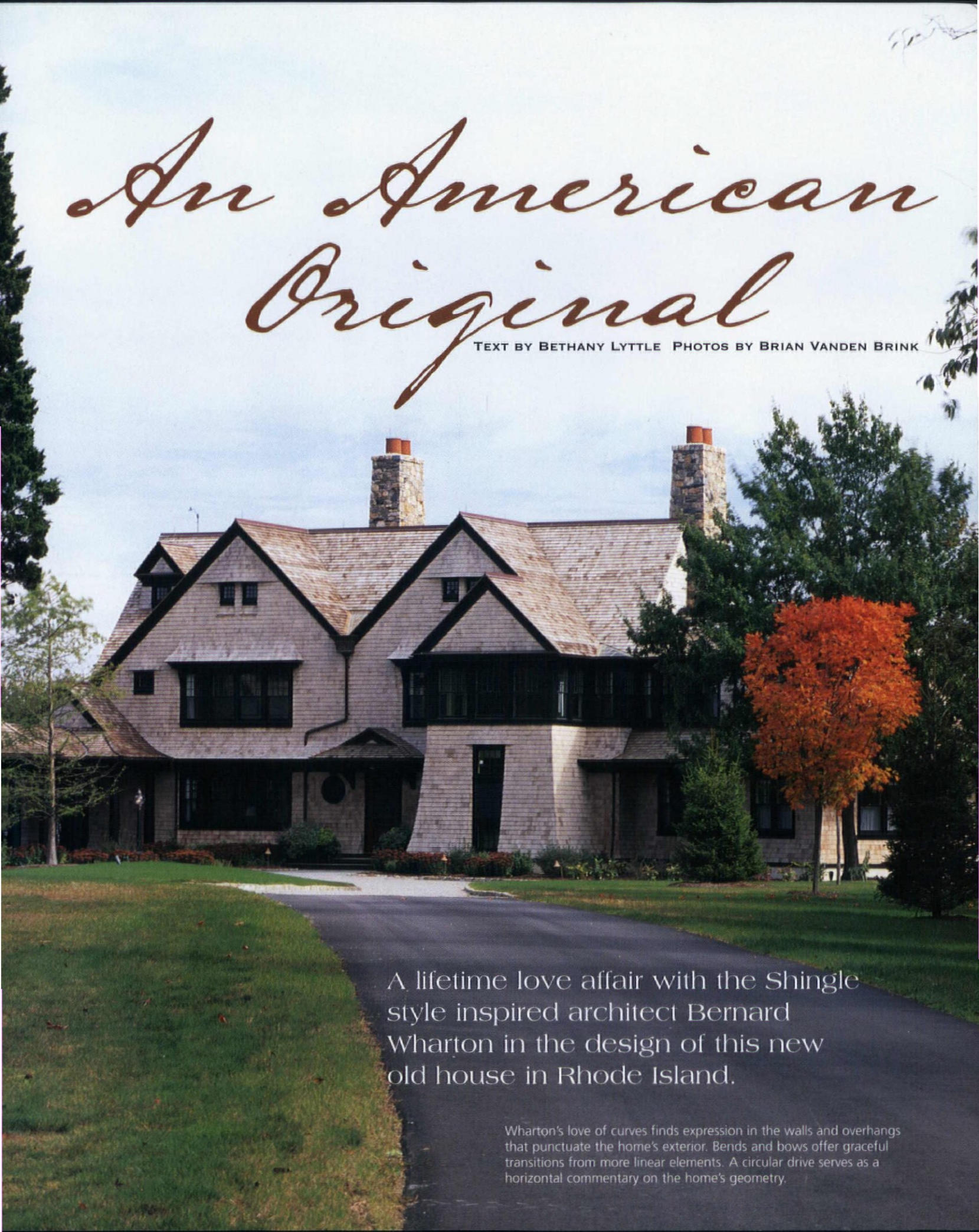
A Place for Everything

For this master bedroom on Martha's Vineyard, Mark Hutker, principal of Hutker Architects, designed the bed, bookshelf, and trundle storage as one unit. The headboard doubles as a 14-inch-deep bookshelf dressed in blue and white bead board, offering the homeowner a spot for everything they might need for bedtime within reach, including a pair of swing-arm wall reading lamps. The deep trundle drawers store extra linens and comforters. The baseboard wraps around the bed, tying it to the wall visually. The room is reminiscent of simple Shaker designs—"a place for everything and everything in its place," says Hutker.



An American Original

TEXT BY BETHANY LYTTLE PHOTOS BY BRIAN VANDEN BRINK



A lifetime love affair with the Shingle style inspired architect Bernard Wharton in the design of this new old house in Rhode Island.

Wharton's love of curves finds expression in the walls and overhangs that punctuate the home's exterior. Bends and bows offer graceful transitions from more linear elements. A circular drive serves as a horizontal commentary on the home's geometry.





Architect Bernard Wharton's boyhood summers were passed on southern Rhode Island's rugged shore, the days perfumed by ocean breezes. Home was one of the ubiquitous shingled dwellings that dot the Ocean State's landscape. Though it would be decades before he'd receive international recognition for his designs, these childhood experiences influenced Wharton and account, in part, for his intense appreciation of the gentle dignity and casual sophistication of American Shingle-style architecture.

"I grew up in a Shingle-style house," says Wharton, "so I have sentimental as well as intellectual attachments to the style. But even after all these years, I'm still amazed at its flexibility and still impressed with the durability of its materials."

It was an honor, therefore, as well as a delightful coincidence when a couple, both professionals from Philadelphia, approached Wharton (of Shope Reno Wharton Architecture) to design a Shingle-style getaway in the very area of Rhode Island where Wharton had grown up. Not only did he know the area like the back of his hand, but he also had walked on the very lot the couple had purchased. During the 1930s, the property had been a golf course, but it had long since become overgrown. However, a persistent hike through the wild brush ended in commanding views of the ocean and its rugged coastline. This would be the site for the house.

That the dwelling would be Shingle style was never in question. Both Wharton and his clients agreed that this was the style that would be truest to the architectural context of the area. As popular now as it was when it was first being developed 125 years ago, the style's history has stood the test of time. Shingles allow for a wide array of attractive surface patterns, and they are also extremely durable. In fact, the style, which is native to the United States, was primarily utilitarian. Shingles were valued because they had the ability to stand up to harsh waterfront weather and they were inexpensive. Indigenous to the United States, cedar (the same material used today) was readily available, keeping building costs down.

Though less ornate than their inspiration, the earliest incarnations of Shingle-style architecture were adaptations of Queen Anne designs. Prominent roofs with long slopes or steep pitches were common, and rugged stone or field rubble was the

A warm entryway serves as the crossroads to the rest of the house, inviting guests in through an arched doorway to a living room with ocean views. Steps lead to the stair tower, which offers additional glimpses of the water. The entry vestibule was intentionally designed to hug the courtyard side of the house. This allowed Wharton to maximize access to waterfront vistas from every other room in the house.



In keeping with Wharton's philosophy that the house should flow from indoors to outdoors and from room to room, the dining room is fitted with French doors leading to a deck with an ocean view as well as with pocket doors leading to the kitchen.

material most typically used for contrast as well as its avalability. Turrets and verandas were common features as well in early designs. Wharton's design for the Rhode Island site would pay tribute to this history—and it would also incorporate a little bit of the unexpected. "I designed the house to have a certain playfulness about it. There are moments of whimsy—small eyebrow windows, for instance, or big overhangs that create shadow and depth—unexpected details that lend a bit of magic to the experience of being there," reflects Wharton. "It's subtle, but it's there. And that's what makes the house fun."

Codesigned for Living

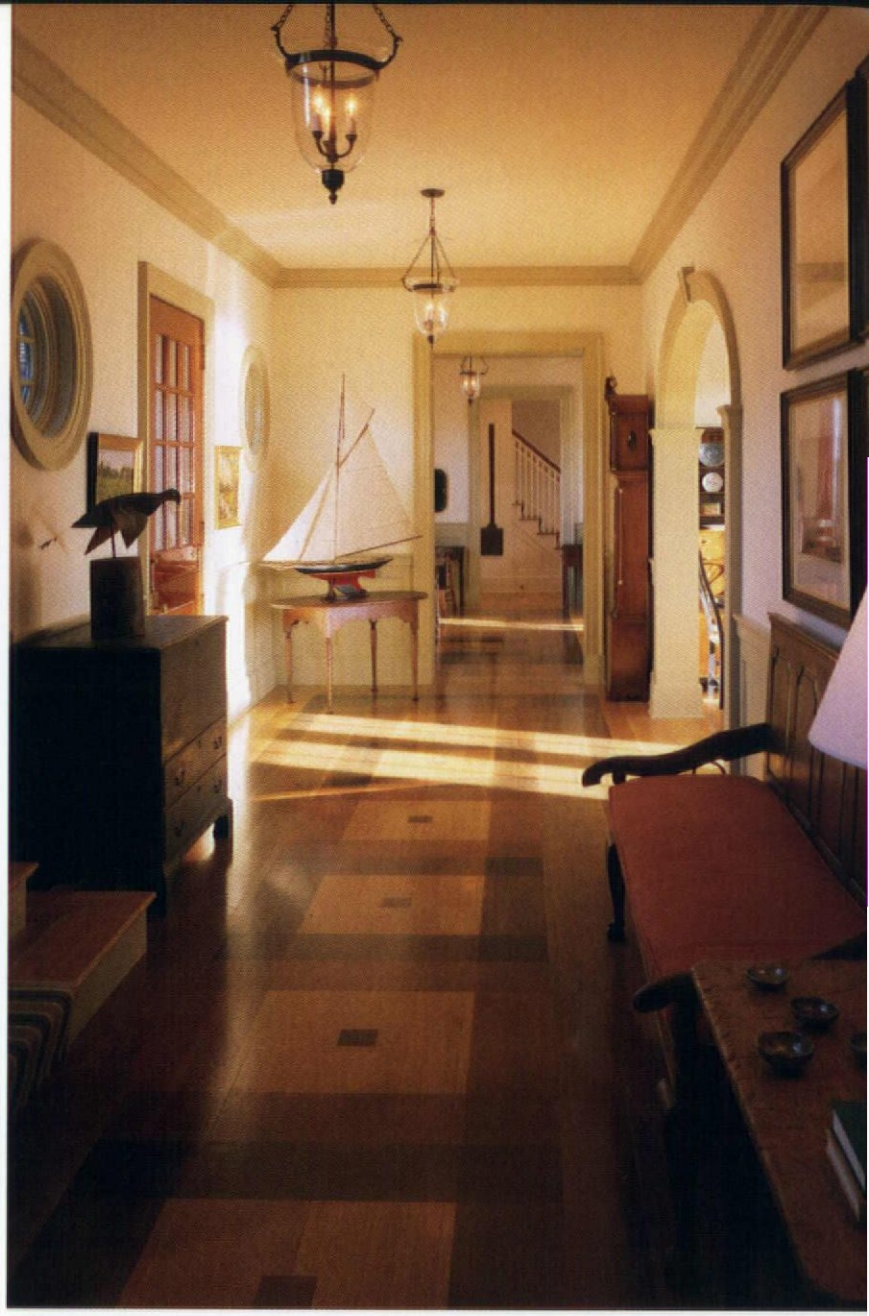
Wharton's clients yearned for a place they could retreat and unwind. The house was to be a summer house, though not in the traditional sense of the word. "Times have changed," explains Wharton. "A summer house isn't just about summer anymore; it's a place for all seasons. I began to see this shift about 20 years ago. Technology and convenience of transportation as well as a strong economy mean a more nomadic society." Spending holidays (such as Thanksgiving and New Year's Eve) as well as mid-autumn vacations or spring breaks at the family getaway is now commonplace.

The Rhode Island house needed to accommodate such all-season visits, and it also needed to be personalized to suit the needs and values of its residents. "Great architecture is contingent on the synergy between the architect and the client," says Wharton. "At the end of the day, we have to be able to stand back and say, 'We've created this together.'" So, Wharton worked closely with his clients to integrate their ideas into the design. A deck on the second floor, for example, resulted in an open terrace-style space that now offers an elevated view of ships coming in and out of the bay. "It was their idea," says Wharton. "I simply took it from there."

Getting to know his clients better allowed Wharton to further customize the design. The home has a generous and



Two round windows, a nautical reference, flank a mahogany Dutch door at the front entryway. The curvilinear stair tower functions as a beacon at the end of the driveway, particularly at night when its transparent upper level is lit from within.



The front hall is filled with New England antiques as well as coastal accessories. The interior is reminiscent of the Colonial Revival style. Note the classical arch between the front hall and living room.

open floor plan, unobstructed views from almost every room, and a warm, cozy interior that is as welcoming as it is beautiful. For easy entertaining, the dining room was designed to open onto a first-floor terrace with views of the water. Pocket doors, which were added between the dining room and kitchen, can be left open for family dining but can be closed when guests are present to foster a sense of formality. Separate guest quarters over the garage were also included in the design; a one-bedroom apartment with a separate living room allows for privacy and makes it possible for family or friends to stay for extended visits.

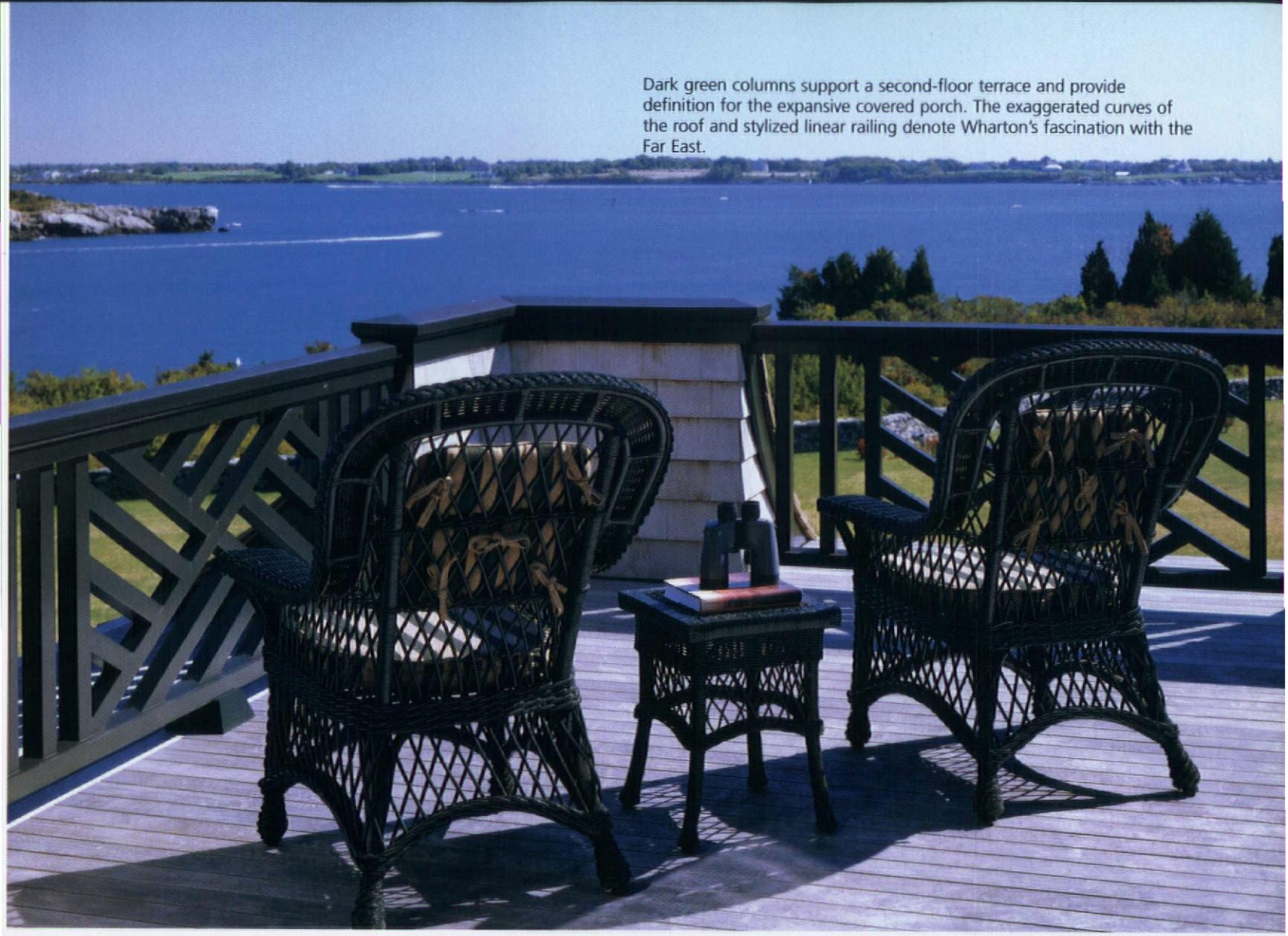
A Call for Stewardship

A respectful integration of the house into the natural environment that made up the building site was of paramount importance to both Wharton and his clients. As Wharton puts it, all buildings disrupt nature, but at the very least, an effort should be made to ensure the house looks as if it belongs, and that it works, both aesthetically and environmentally, in tandem with its environs. "It's a form of stewardship," says Wharton. "It's a responsibility I take very seriously."

Coupled with his commitment to the natural environment was a commitment to the history of the architectural style. The Shingle style was always subtle, something that in spite of the occasional flourish or interpretation Wharton attempts to honor. "I try hard to add interest without overdoing it," he says. The house is designed to offer gentle views not only of the outdoors but also of unexpected architectural vignettes. From inside, the doors and windows are positioned to frame water views, transforming each vista into living landscape art. Each



The elevated master bedroom provides endless opportunities for dramatic views. Large windows make the ocean the focus, while wicker furnishings serve as a restful backdrop.



Dark green columns support a second-floor terrace and provide definition for the expansive covered porch. The exaggerated curves of the roof and stylized linear railing denote Wharton's fascination with the Far East.







architectural element complements rather than overwhelms the natural world.

Of course, today's Shingle-style homes differ from their earliest antecedents. Changes in lifestyle combined with advances in the performance and quality of building materials have impacted interpretations of the style. For example, design elements that would have been impossible a century ago are now accommodated with ease. Consider window size. A hundred years ago, views of the ocean and surrounding property would have been cropped tightly through a succession of multipaned windows. Today, large single-pane windows invite homeowners into the expansive views beyond the walls of a dwelling. "The goal is to design a historical vernacular that harkens back to history but is designed for how we live today," says Wharton.

A Surprising Approach

Prior to stepping through the mahogany Dutch door that leads into the house, visitors experience a suspense-filled journey along a winding driveway flanked by trees and old stone walls. Intentionally designed to be a surprise, the house awaits at the end of the drive. When a glimpse of the house is finally revealed, the vision is of a series of planes, or layers, of elegant, almost Japanese curves, but also of regional American architectural history. The water, too, comes into view—just off to one side—hinting at what will soon be witnessed in full from inside. It's a journey that Wharton has taken, both literally and figuratively, several times now. "I experience such a thrill as I make my way along the driveway, viewing beautiful grounds that were once an overgrown golf course. It makes me very aware of the capacity for ideas—for dreams—to come alive, to assume tangible form. I never get used to that feeling. And I never stop learning—because when you think you know it all, you're finished." NOH

Bethany Lyttle is a freelance writer living in New York.

For Resources, see page 102.

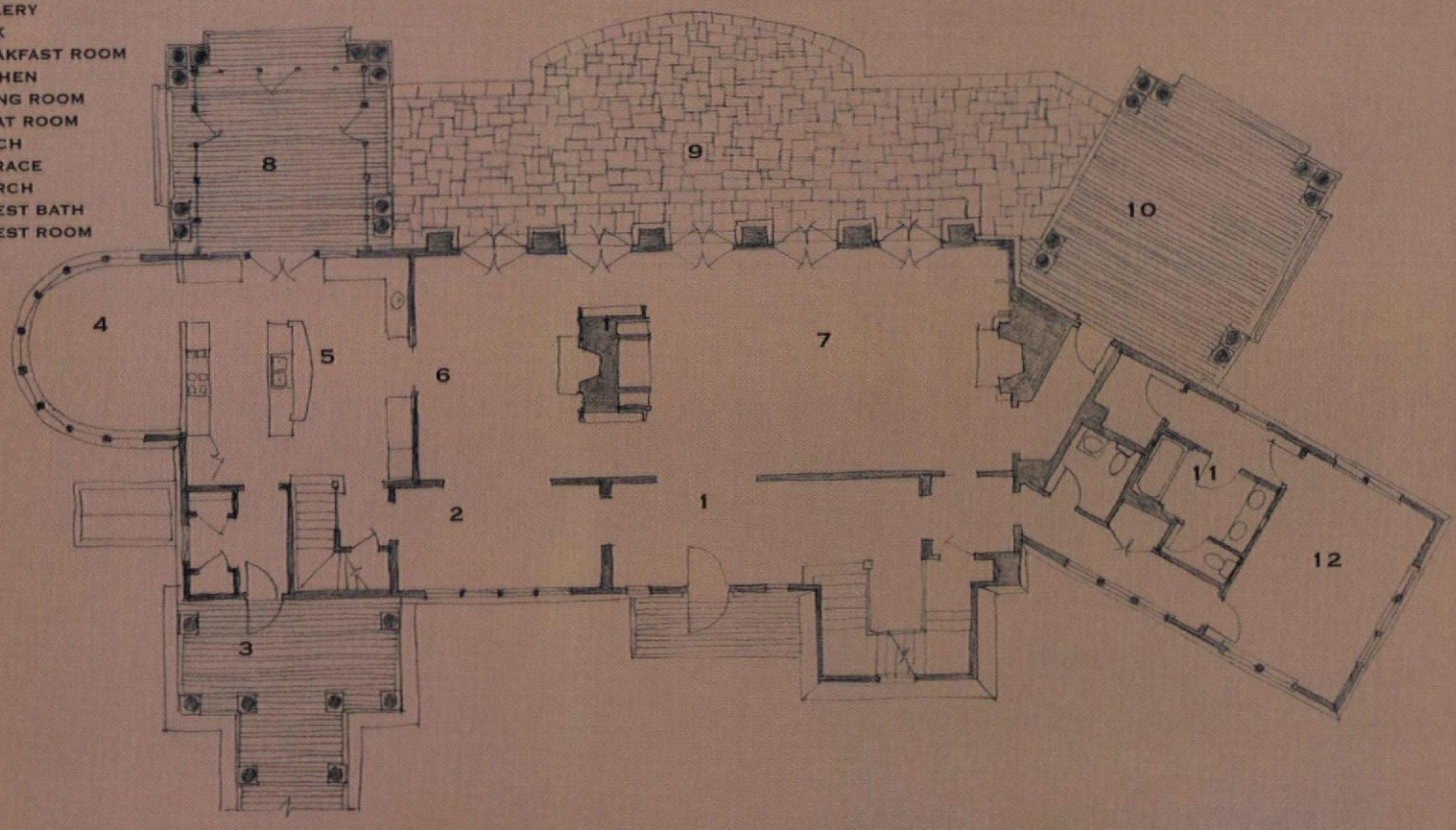
Wharton incorporated built-in book shelves and a simple mantel design into the living room. Furnishings are cool and casual. A seagrass rug dresses the floor while walls are painted a creamy white.

Shingle Style



First Floor

1 ENTRY HALL
2 GALLERY
3 DECK
4 BREAKFAST ROOM
5 KITCHEN
6 DINING ROOM
7 GREAT ROOM
8 PORCH
9 TERRACE
10 PORCH
11 GUEST BATH
12 GUEST ROOM





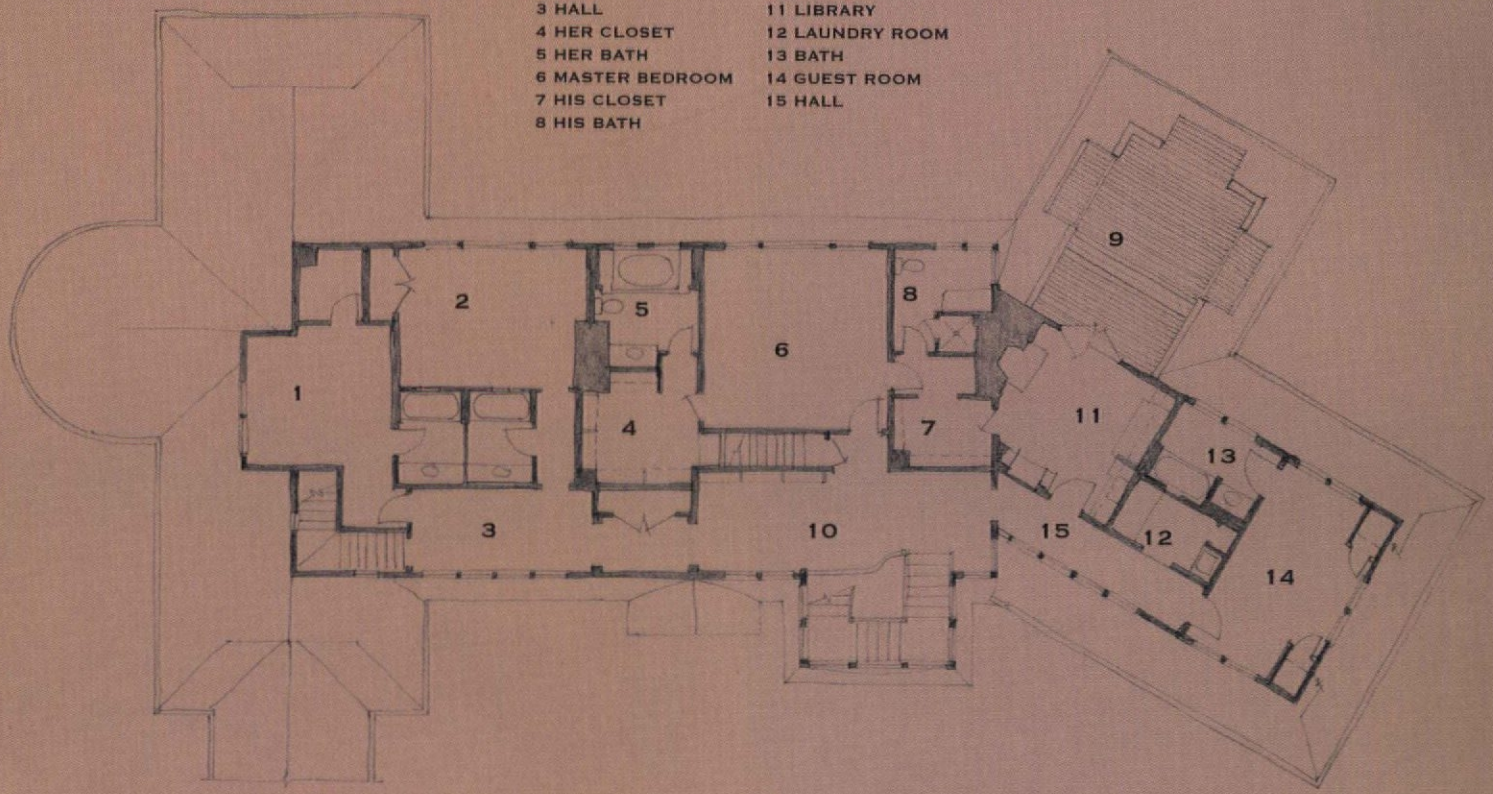
Historical Reference

From about 1874 until the early 1900s, Shingle-style architecture was commonplace in New England's coastal towns. Covered entirely in shingles, the structures were adored for their organic elegance. Architectural shapes, such as turrets, dormers, and verandas, were "wrapped" tightly in shingles, each surface transitioning without definition to the next. The flow so evident on the exterior of these houses was echoed inside. Rooms were designed to stream gracefully from one area to the next. The style is still valued for its soft, faded appearance and understated elegance. Newport, Rhode Island, and Cohasset, Massachusetts, are home to some of the finest examples in the country, as is New York's Long Island. H.H. Richardson and the firm of McKim, Mead and White are the New England architects credited with bringing the free-form style into favor.

Designed by McKim, Mead and White, the Isaac Bell House was built in 1883. Inspired by Colonial America rather than European forms, the architectural firm incorporated wood shingles and understated doors, windows, and trim. These details are a tribute to early America's housing stock and also offer a dynamic and unique architectural expression.

Second Floor

1 BEDROOM
2 BEDROOM
3 HALL
4 HER CLOSET
5 HER BATH
6 MASTER BEDROOM
7 HIS CLOSET
8 HIS BATH
9 PORCH
10 HALL
11 LIBRARY
12 LAUNDRY ROOM
13 BATH
14 GUEST ROOM
15 HALL

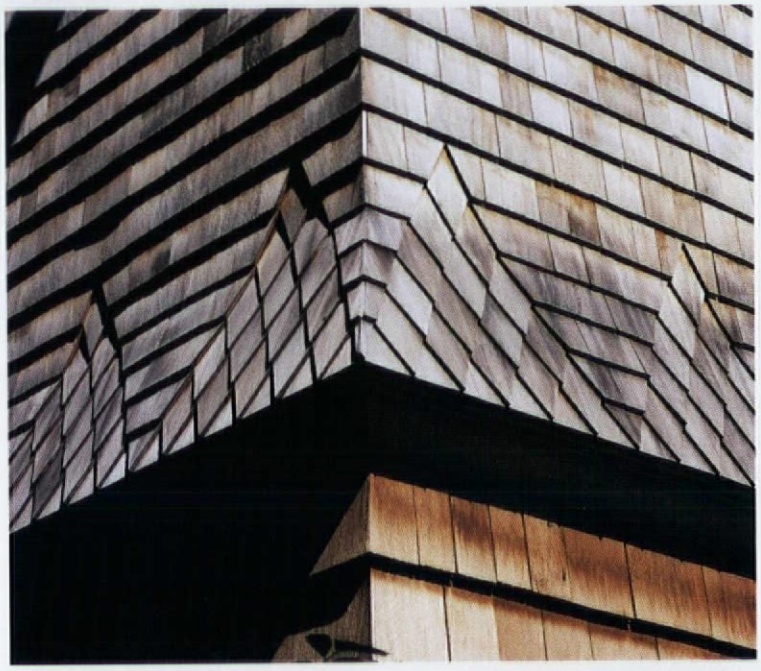


Arts and Crafts Extra!

A sampling of details used in the Hayes Cottage featured on page 76.



Left This Conant Custom Brass mission style pendant light fixture is a reproduction from a cottage on Lake George, in the Adirondacks. The cast bronze lantern with dark antique finish is 23.5 inches high by 7.25 inches wide and costs $350. Visit www.conantcustombrass.com. Circle 3 on the resource card. *Right* These decorative shingles add an Arts and Crafts touch. The shingle is predipped red cedar. Available through www.beavercreeklumber.com. Circle 4 on the resource card. *Below left* Designed in 1896 by William Morris's colleague Henry Dearle, this wallpaper was commissioned for Compton Hall in Wolverhampton. "Compton" is available through the Martin Group. Visit www.martingroupinc. com. Circle 5 on the resource card. (Bruce LaRose of Vermont built the staircase.) *Bottom right* Sit pretty in these "Shelburne" sidechairs made by Wild Oaks Furniture in Vermont. They retail for $152 each. Visit www.wild-oaks.com. Circle 6 on the resource card.







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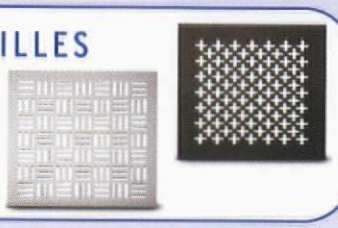

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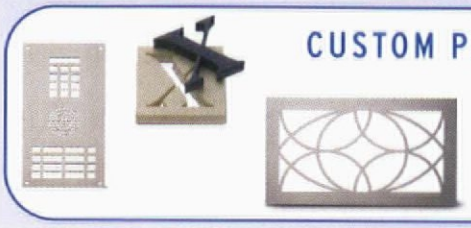

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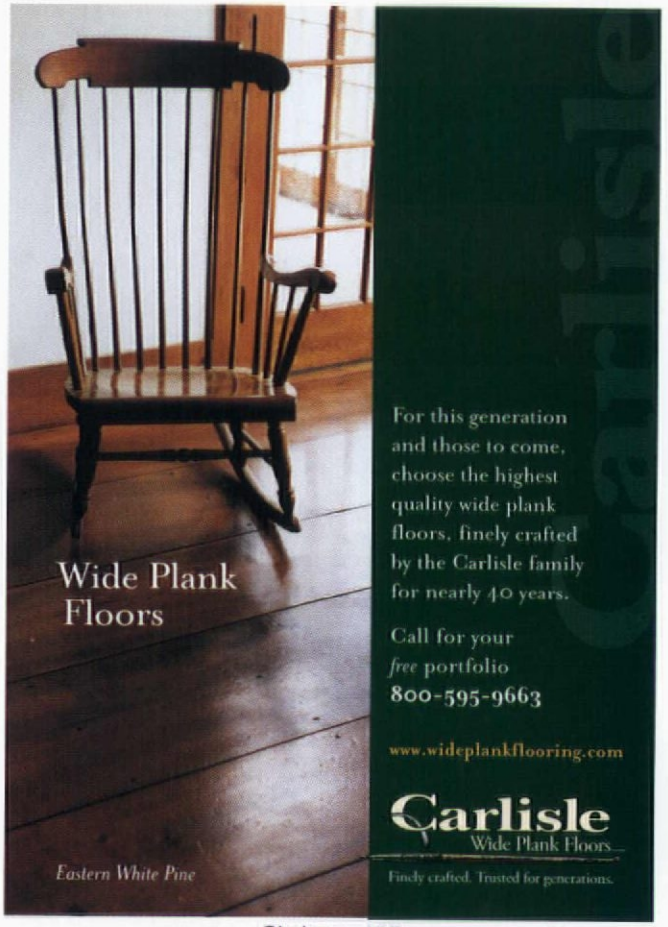

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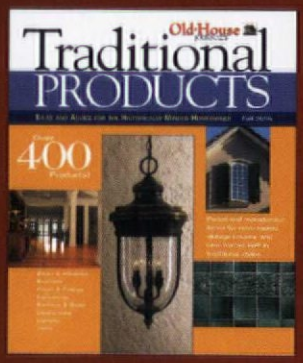

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Drafting Board, page 16
Long Meadow Farm,
Fishersville, VA
Architect: Frazier Associates Architects & Planners,
213 North Augusta Street
Staunton, VA 24401
(540) 886-6230
www.frazierassociates.com

Landscape architect: Owner, with assistance from Andre Viette Farm & Nursery, Fishersville, Virginia
(800) 575-5538

EXTERIOR
Windows: Marvin Windows and DoorsStorms:
www.marvin.com
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Doors: Marvin Windows and Doors
www.marvin.com
circle 7 on the resource card.

Paint: Benjamin Moore
www.benjaminmoore.com
Circle 8 on the resource card.

Roof: Standing seam metal roof

INTERIORS
Doors: Marvin Windows and Doors
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Light fixtures: Hunter ceiling fan
www.hunterfan.com
Circle 9 on the resource card.

Paint: Benjamin Moore
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Circle 8 on the resource card.

Harvest table
Harvest table, Byers Street Housewares
12 Byers Street, Staunton, VA 24401, (540) 887-1235
Circle10 on the resource card.

Design Details, page 30
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Outbuildings, page 36
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Tudor Revival, Hollywood Style page 50
Architect Richard Landry
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DW-LA Landscape Architects
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Karen Blake Interior Design
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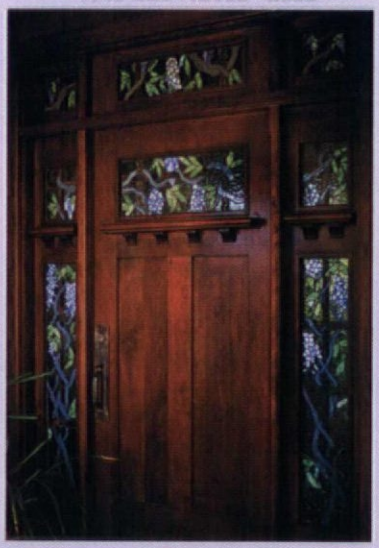

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www.newworldmarble.com
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Sink and faucet: Farmhouse sink, Santa Monica Bath,
(310) 393-4031

Flooring: Flat grain Douglas Fir Bellos Floors Plus, Miguel Bellos (818) 982-8207

Hardware: Taylor Pattern Design
(714) 894-0131

Light fixtures: Lantern Masters
(818) 706-1990
www.lanternmasters.com
Circle 12 on the resource card.

Old House Add-on, page 60
Fawcett–Reeder House
Alexandria, Virginia
Architects: Franck Lohsen McCrery, Architects
1750 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Eighth Floor
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 737.6446
www.flmarchitects.com
New York Offices
270 Lafayette Street
Suite 814
New York, NY 10012
(212) 343.0990
Email: ny@flmarchitects.com

Landscape: Franck Lohsen McCrery

Interior designer: Franck Lohsen McCrery, Architects

EXTERIOR
Windows: true-divided mahogany double hung windows fabricated to match profiles of the house's original 18th-century windows by Raymond Yoder; glass reclaimed from early 19th-century. door and window sashes, re-cut for these windows.

Dutch doors: true-divided mahogany dutch doors by Raymond Yoder; glass reclaimed from early 19th-century door and window sashes, re-cut for these windows.

Paint: Benjamin Moore
www.benjaminmoore.com
Circle 8 on the resource card.

Roof: Standing Seam Metal

Shutters: Restored originals

Siding:Milled white pine clapboards

KITCHEN
Cabinetry: Base Cabinetry: Re-used antique dry-sinks

Countertops: Newly-made white maple butcher-block w/ walnut dutchmen at front edges

Cabinetry: Antique furniture and an early 19th century. formerly built-in corner cabinet.

Chimney: reclaimed brick and reclaimed sandstone; reclaimed eighteenth-century wooden fireplace lintel

Appliances: Kitchenaid
www.kitchenaid.com
Circle 13 on the resource card.
Sink: Home Depot
www.homedepot.com
Circle 14 on the resource card.

Faucet: Home Depot
www.homedepot.com
Circle 14 on the resource card.

Flooring and Ceilings: Remilled antique walnut floors
(Ceiling is rough-sawn poplar planks on rough-sawn white oak timber frame with oak pegs.)

Hardware: All hardware is re-used eighteenth- and nineteenth-century wrought iron: hinges, latches, fireplace crane and accessories.

Updating a Classic, page 70
New York City Kitchen

Architect:
John B. Murray Architect, LLC
36 West 25th Street, 9th Floor
New York, New York 10010



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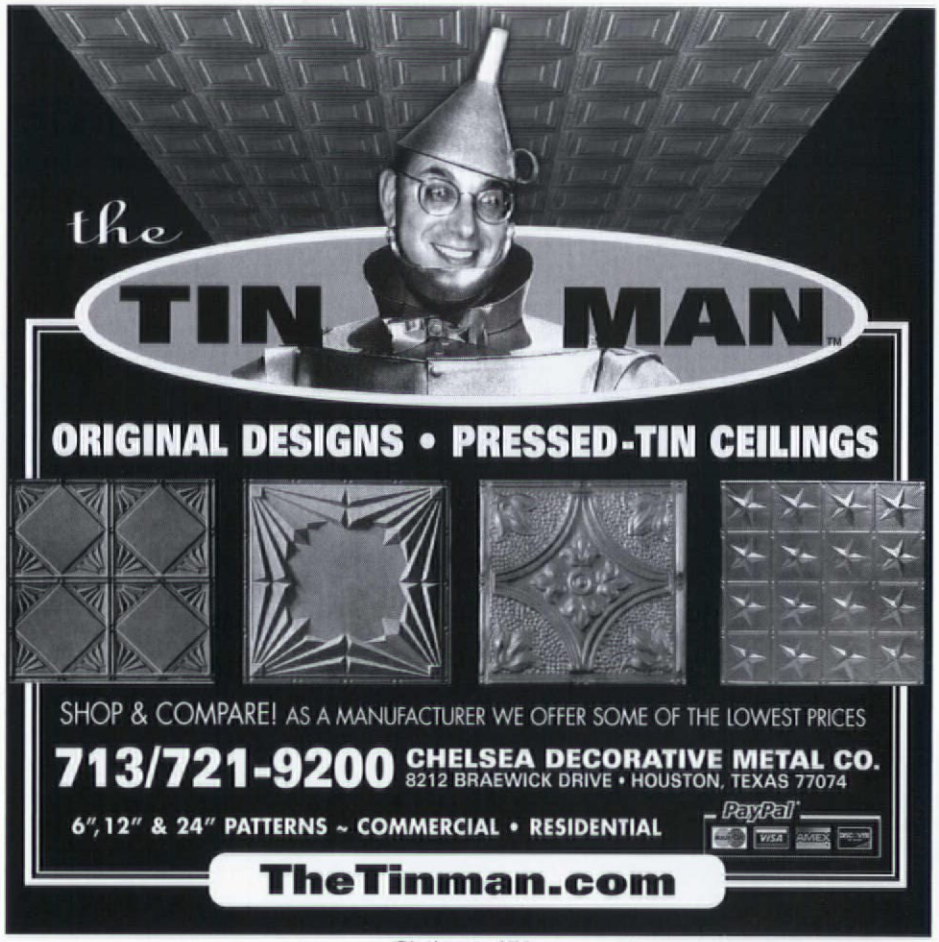

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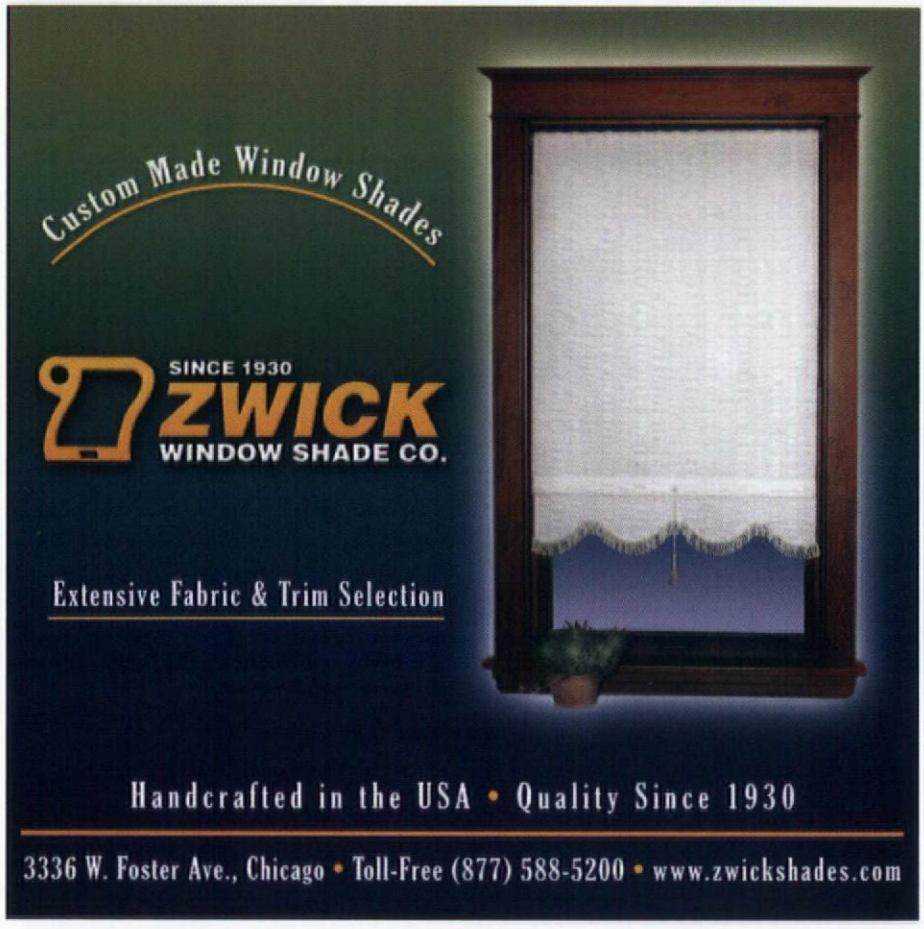

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Associate: William Mincey, AIA
(212) 242-8600
www.jbmarchitect.com
Interior Designer: Jane C. Gould
20 East 80th Street
New York, NY 10021
(212) 288-0770

Contractor:
Yorke Construction Corporation
140 West 31st Street
New York, NY 10001
(212) 564-8467

EXTERIOR
Windows: (Fabricators)
Woodstone Company
P.O. Box 223, Patch Road
Westminster, VT 05158
(802) 722-9217
www.woodstone.com
Circle 15 on resource card.

(Installation)
Bright Window Specialists
336 West 37th Street, 9th Floor
New York, NY 10018
(212) 695-8980

KITCHEN
Cabinetry:Mead & Josipovich
140 58th Street, Space 8B
Brooklyn, NY 11220
(718) 492-7373

Countertops: Burlington Stone
(Elterwater)
(972) 985-9182
www.burlingtonstone.com

Window sills: Stone Source
215 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10003
(212) 979-6400

Backsplash: ceramic tile
Walker & Zanger (Newport Collection, Petite Brick)
www.walkerzanger.com
Circle 16 on the resource card.

Appliances:
Washer / dryer: Miele
www.miele.com
Circle 17 on resource card.

Refrigerator / freezer: Sub Zero
www.subzero.com
Circle 18 on the resource card.
Range: Viking
www.vikingrange.com
Circle 19 on the resource card.

Hood & interior blower: Best by Broan; www.broan.com
Circle 20 on the resource card.

Dishwasher: Asko
www.askousa.com
Circle 21 on the resource card.

Microwave: GE Monogram
www.monogram.com
Circle 22 on the resource card.

Sink: Kitchen—British Belfast Sink (white); www.a-ball.com
Circle 23 on the resource card.

Pantry sink: Waterworks (Bar Sink, custom plated satin nickel)
www.waterworks.com
Circle 24 on the resource card.

Faucet: Kitchen: Harrington Brass Works (Victorian Collection, satin nickel)
www.harringtonbrassworks.com
Circle 25 on the resource card.

Pantry faucet: Waterworks ("Bruges," satin nickel)
www.waterworks.com
Circle 24 on the resource card.

Flooring: 5" oak rift and quartered plank

Hardware: Traditional knobs and olive knuckle hinges in a satin nickel finish from Edward R. Butler Co., Inc. (212) 925-3565
www.erbutler.com
Circle 26 on the resource card.

Other:
Central A/C - supplies are concealed in room
Charles W. Beers, Inc.
(718) 361-7322

Accessories:
Motorized shades: Draper
www.draperinc.com
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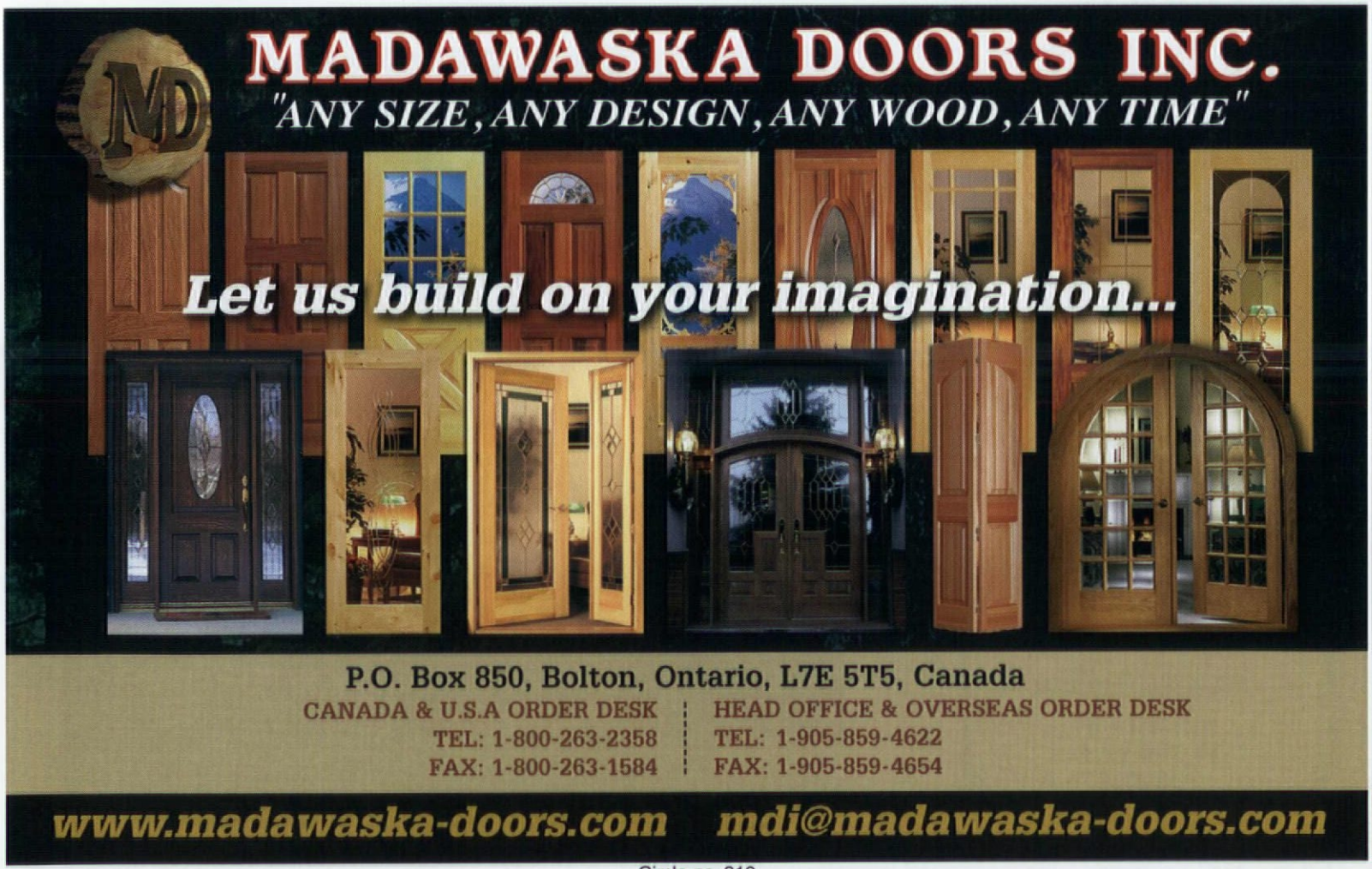

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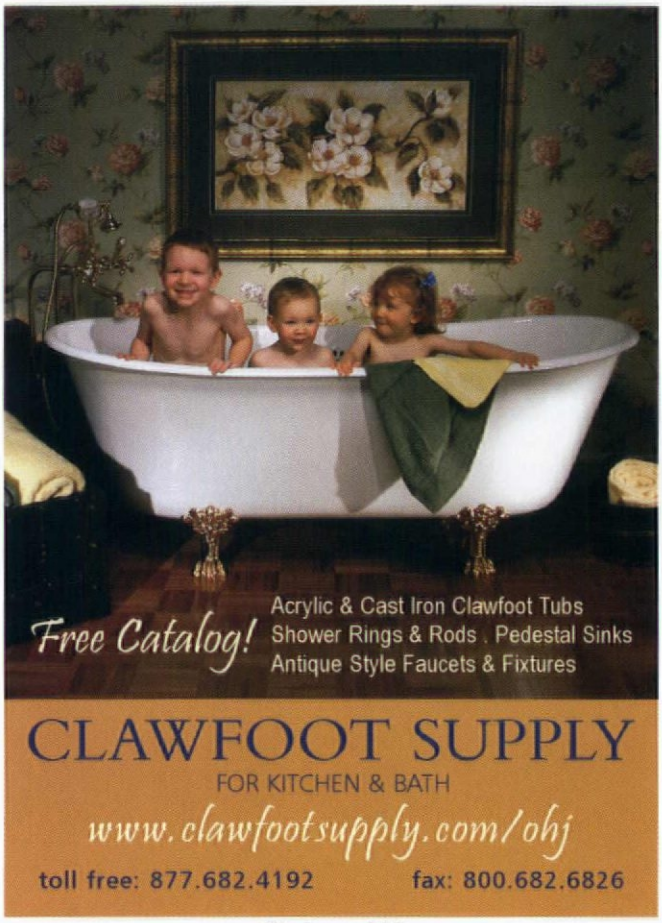

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Circle no. 561

Resources

INTERIORS:
Woodwork: Custom Mead & Josipovich
140 58th Street, Space 8B
Brooklyn, NY 11220
(718) 492-7373

Light Fixtures: Holophane lights with Antique light restoration glass and a satin nickel finish from Corcoran's Antique Services
P.O. Box 568
East Moriches, NY 11940
(631) 878-4988

Antique light restoration glass from S.A. Bendheim Co., Inc.
122 Hudson Street
New York, NY 10013
(212) 226-6370
www.bendheim.com
Circle 28 on the resource card.

Paint: Benjamin Moore
www.benjaminmoore.com
circle 8 on the resource card.

English Arts and Crafts, page 76
Hayes Cottage
Architect: Sandra Vitzthum Architect, LLC
46 East State Street
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-1806
www.sandravitzthum.com

Millwork and bed: Bruce LaRose Custom Millwork Barre, VT
(802) 472-3899

Ironwork: Lucien Avery (Hardwick, VT) (802) 472-3899

Windows: Marvin with leaded custom inserts
www.marvin.com
Circle 7 on the card.

Leaded glass:Bert Conlisk Studio B Stained Glass Dallas, TX
(817) 455-7887

Arts and Crafts fabrics and wallpapers: Interior Design Consultant Michael FitzSimmons Decorative Arts of Chicago (312) 787-0496
Lighting: Conant Custom Glass Burlington, VT
(800) 832-4482
www.conantcustombrass.com
Circle 29 on the resource card.
Wallpaper and Fabrics: The Martin Group; www.martingroupinc.com
Circle 32 on the resource card.

Tile: North Country Tile, Burlington Vermont;
www.northcountrytile.com
Circle 33 on the resource card.

Wild Oaks Furniture
Barre, VT
www.wild-oaks.com
Circle 5 on the resource card.

Bedroom Built-in, page 86
Stephen Blatt
10 Danforth Street
Portland, ME 04112
(207) 761-5911
www.sbarchitects.com

Hutker Architects
79 Beach Road
Vineyard Haven, MA 02568
(508) 693-3344
www.hutkerarchitects.com

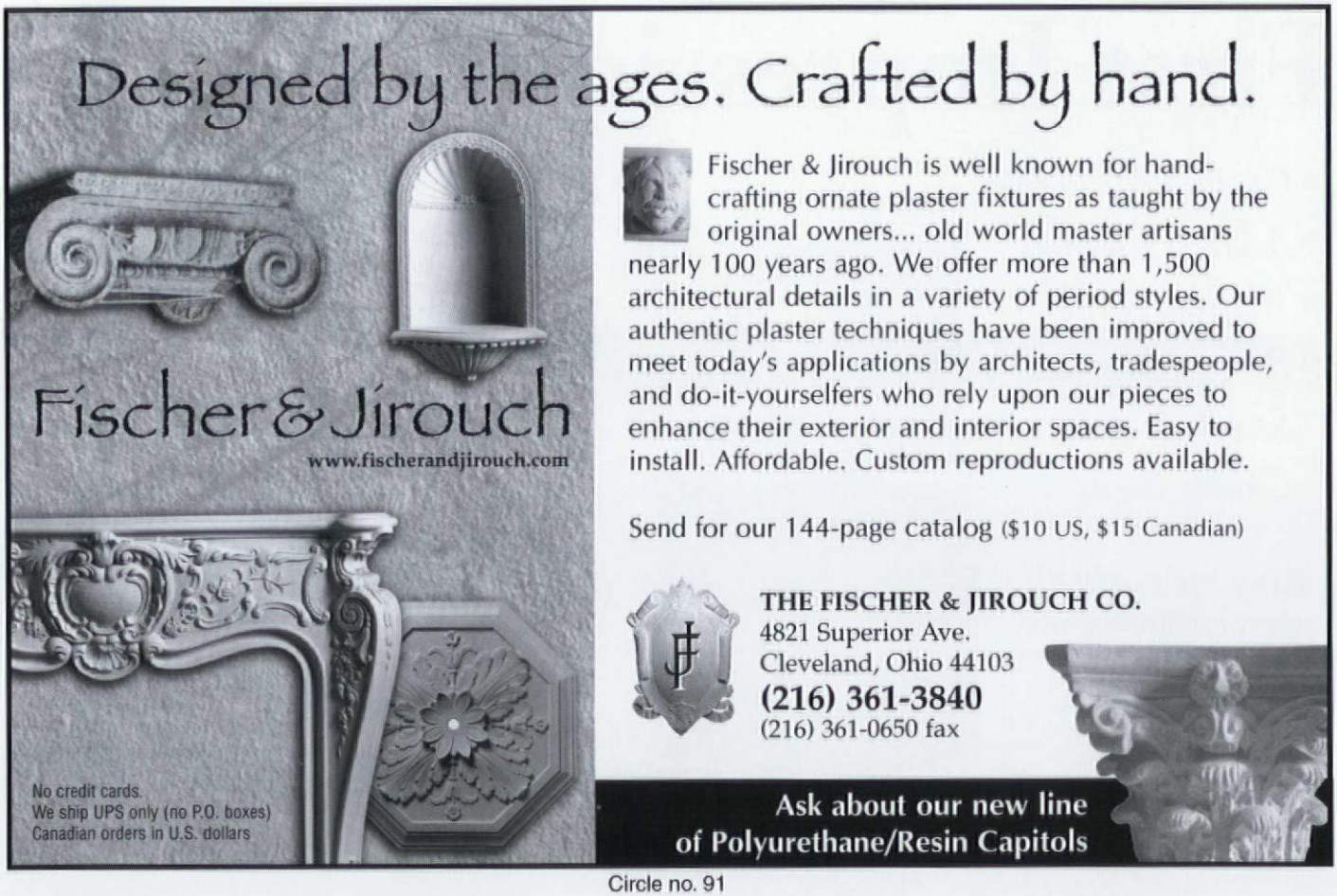
An American Original, page 90
Bernard Wharton
Shope Reno Wharton Associates
18 West Putnam Avenue
Greenwich, Connecticut 06830
(203) 869-7250
www.shoperenowharton.com

Exterior
Windows and Doors: Dynamic Architectural Windows & Doors, British Columbia, Canada
(800)-661-8111
www.dynamicwindows.com
Circle 30 on the resource card.

Interior
Bathroom: Waterworks
www.waterworks.com
Circle 24 on the resource card.

Hardware Baldwin
www.baldwin.com
Circle 31 on the resource card.

Paint Benjamin Moore
www.benjaminmoore.com
Circle 8 on the resource card.



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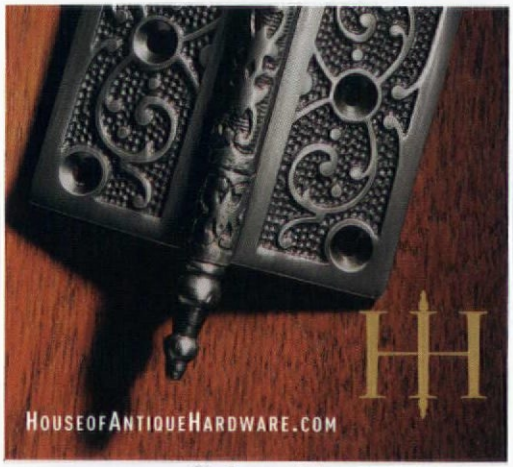

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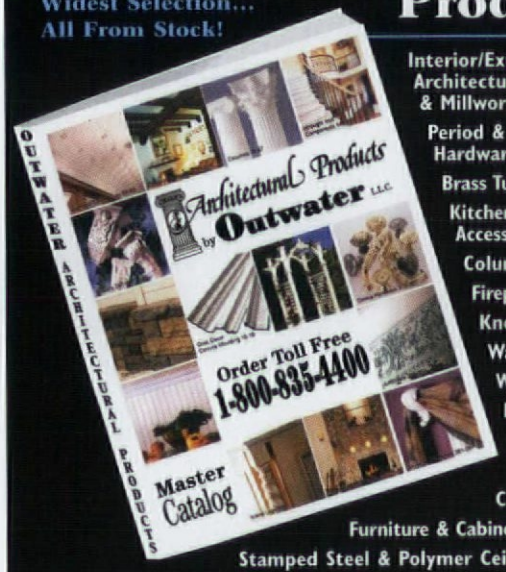

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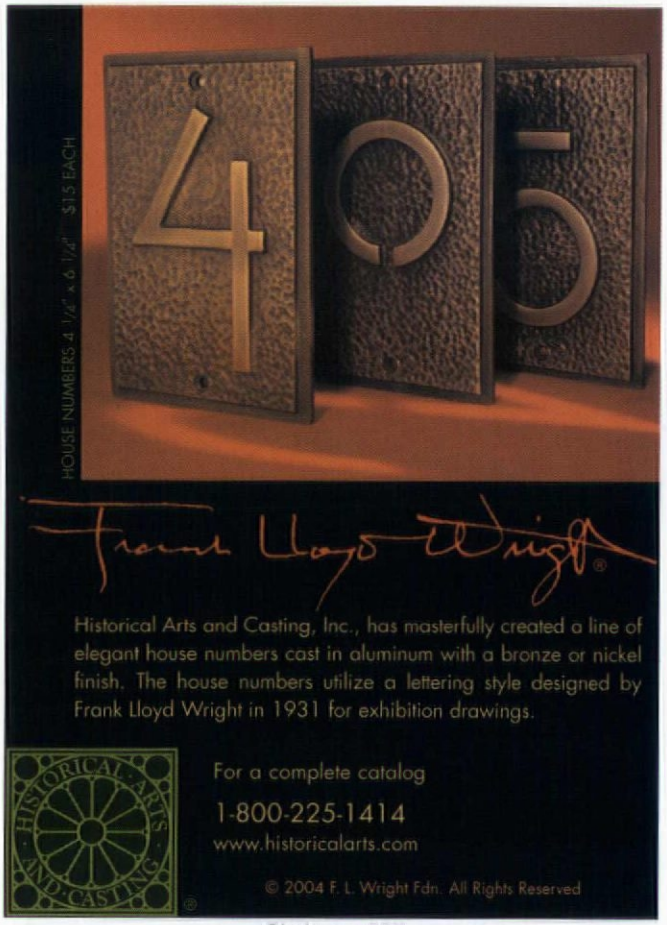

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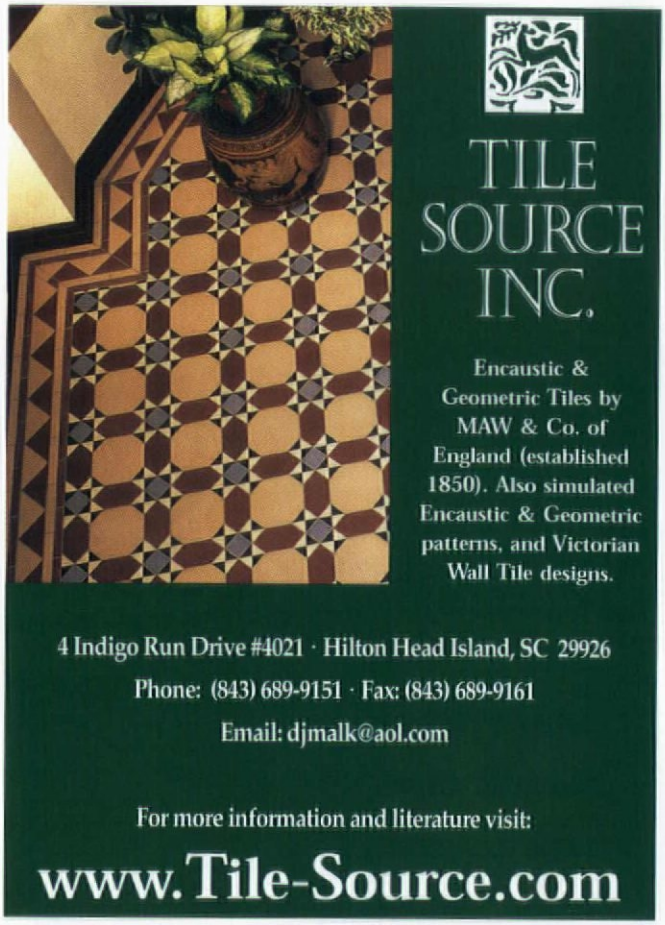

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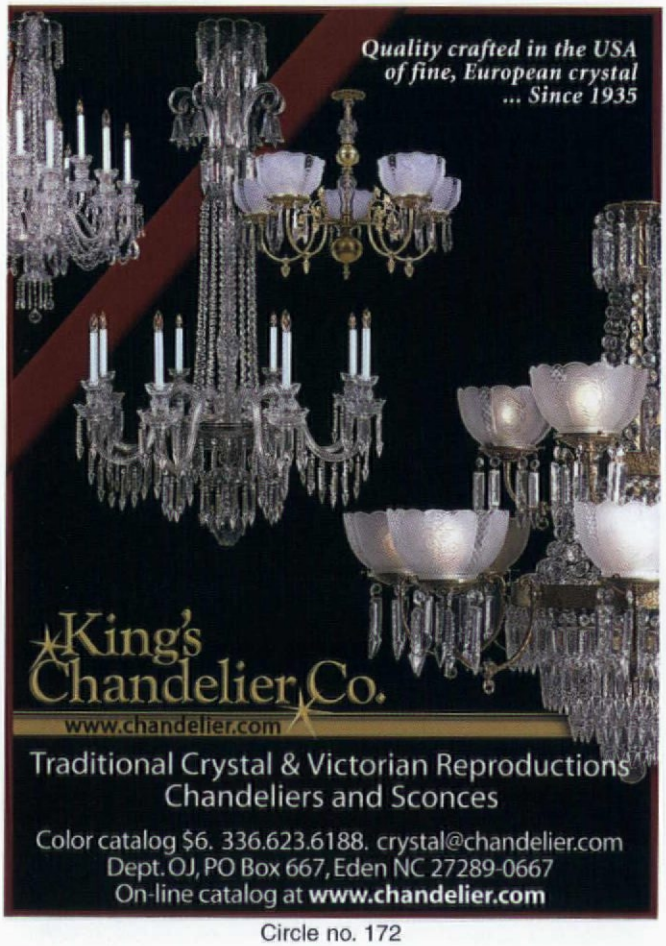

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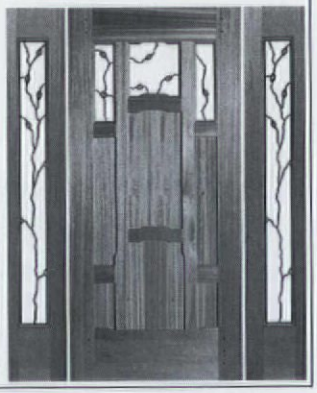

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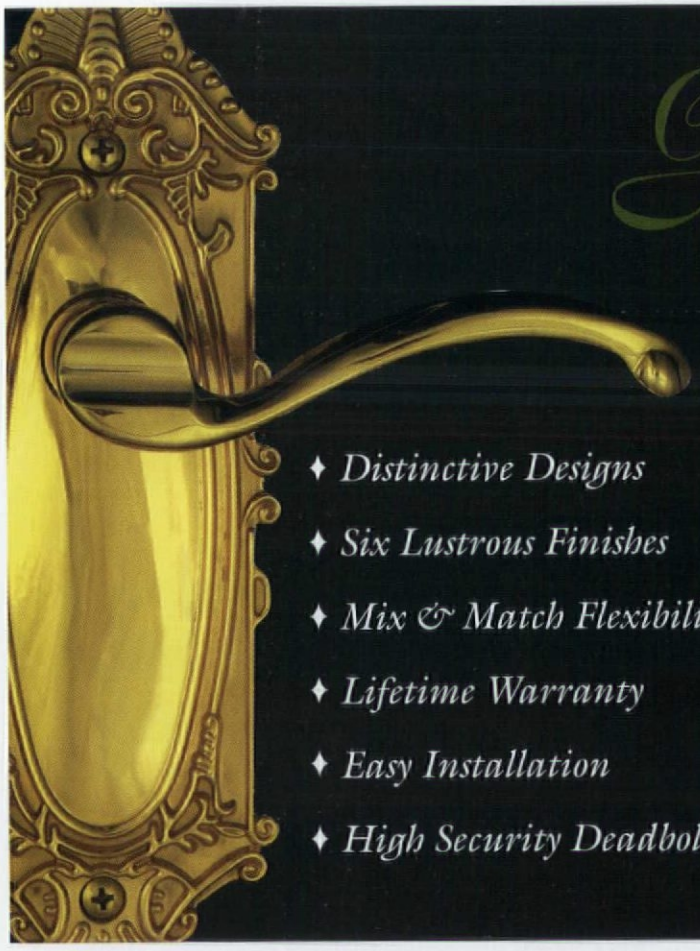

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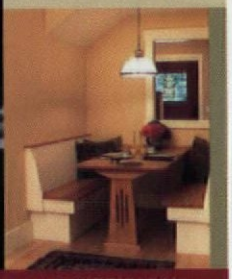

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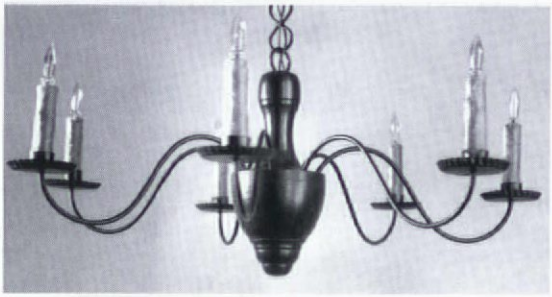

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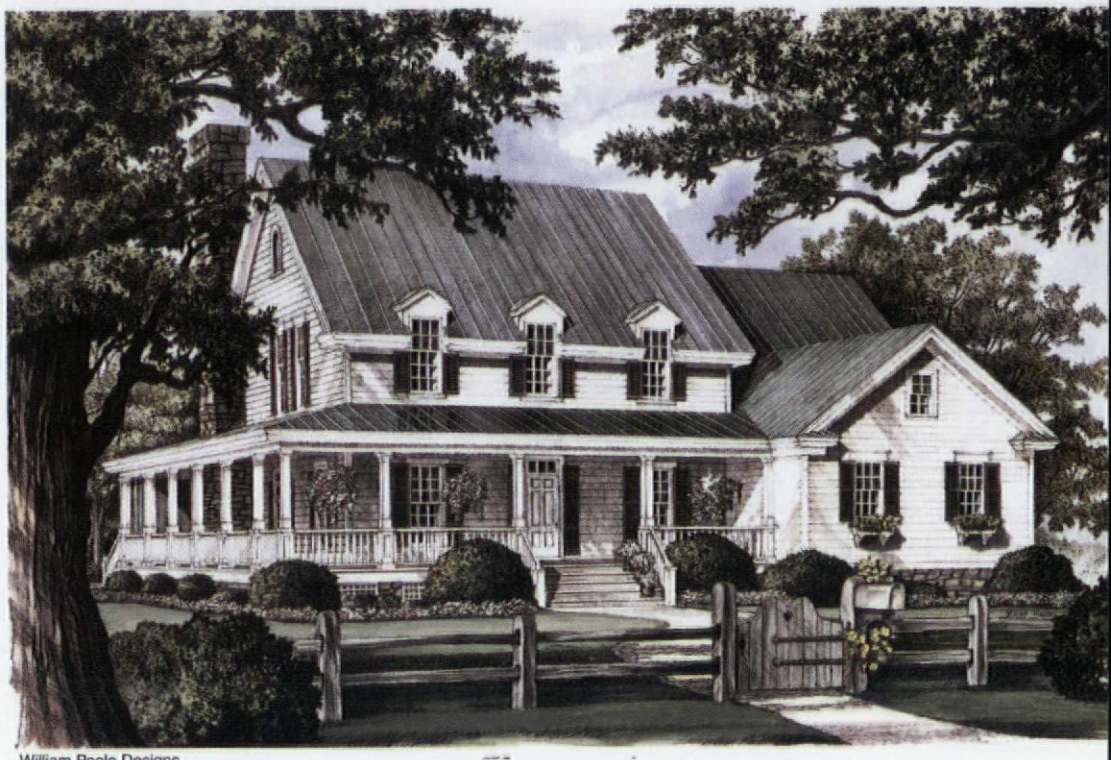

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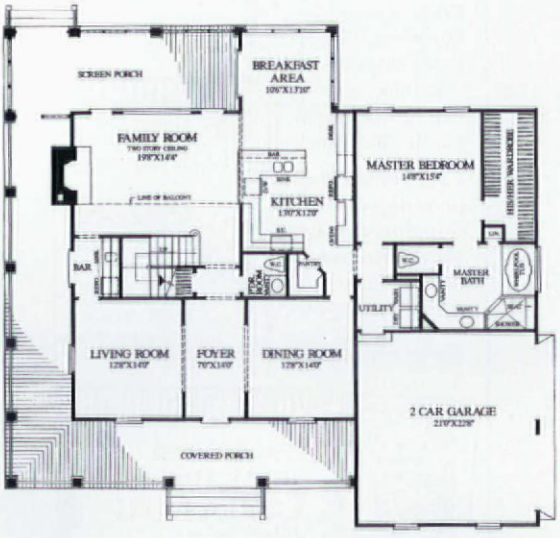

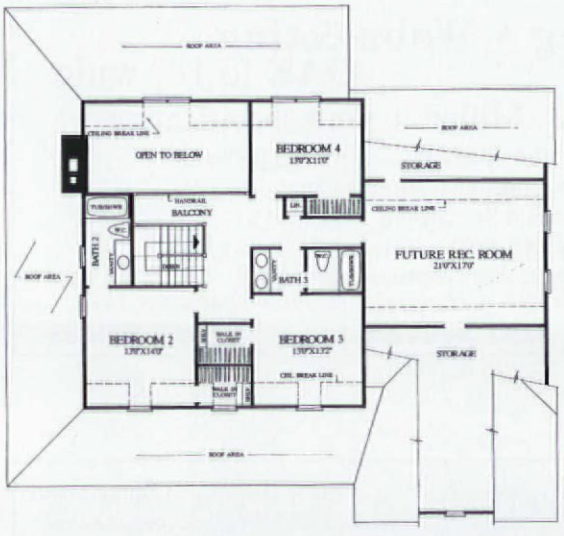

HOMESTEAD

Square Footage 2,910
First Floor 1,913
Second Floor 997
Ceiling Height 9′
Second Floor 9′

Overall Dimensions
Width 63′
Depth 59.4′

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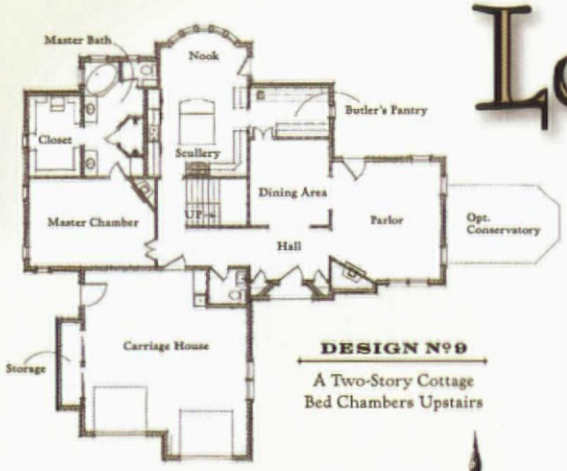

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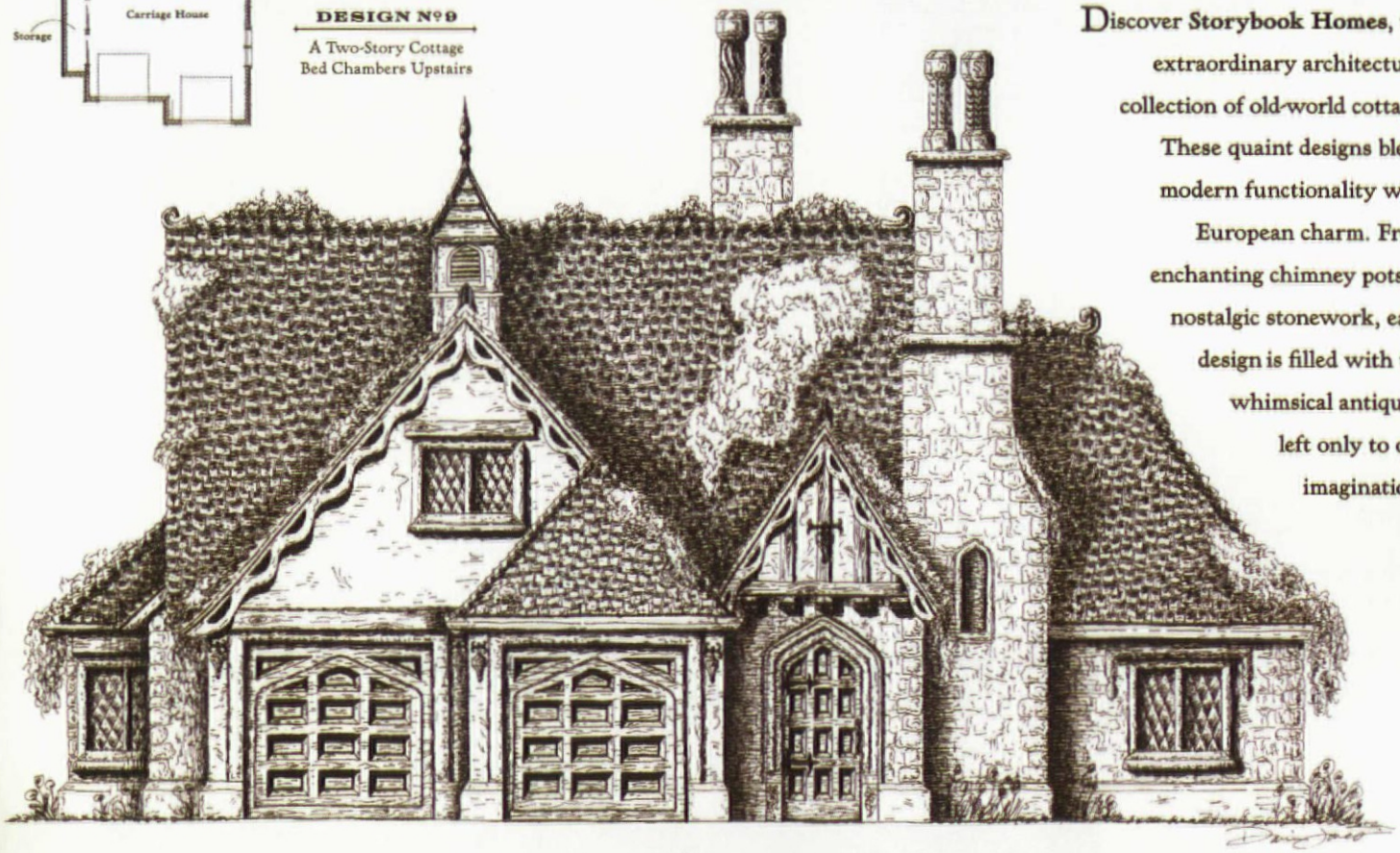



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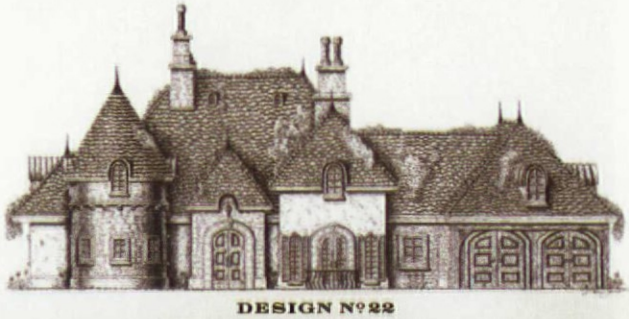

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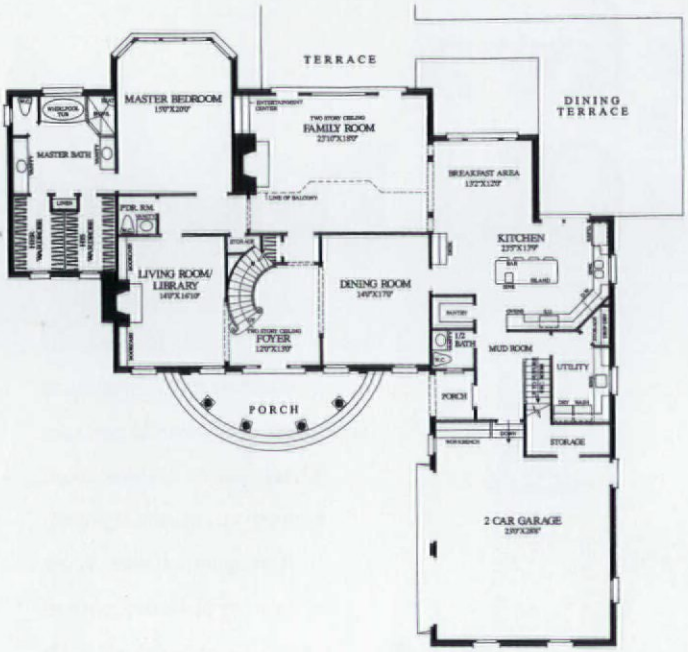

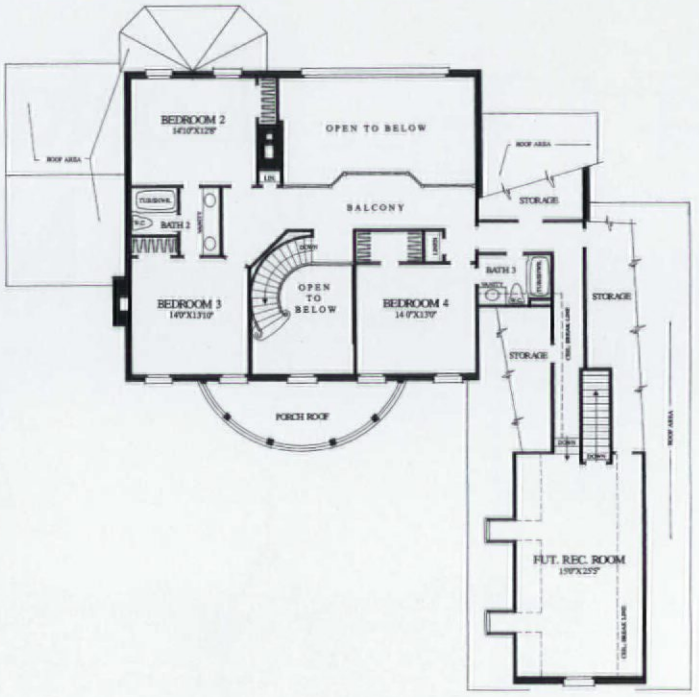

EVERGREEN

Square Footage 3,946
First Floor 2,167
Second Floor 1,179

Ceiling Height 10′
Second Floor 9′

Overall Dimensions
Width 79.11′
Depth 80.6′

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EVERGREEN

Memories of Christmases at home with the large tree greeting you upon entering the gracious foyer, garland hanging along the curved staircase, carols being sung around the piano in the library, turkey and pumpkin pie baking in the kitchen—these are what the Evergreen is all about. With the curved and columned front porch, authentic detail and gracious flow, family and neighbors gather with joy in this "home for all seasons" throughout the year and especially for holidays.



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Overview
Founded in 1991, Harrison Design Associates is a national expert in the design of high-end custom residential homes, town homes, and specialty commercial projects. With offices in both Atlanta, Georgia and Santa Barbara, California, award-winning Harrison Design Associates is dedicated to creating quality designs that are inspired by the best of traditional architecture.

Philosophy
Our team considers design a life-long study and a passion; all architects and interns are classically trained and receive continuing education in the American Institute of Architects and the Classical Institute of America.

We believe that a handcrafted house is an individual work of art; it provides owners with a wonderful place to call home and serves as an enduring investment to showcase the individuality of the families that will live there.

Services
Our services include site planning, architectural design, architectural interior design and construction administration. We are equally skilled in the design of new construction, renovations and additions. At every stage of completion, we carefully review the progress of the project to ensure the final product is of the finest quality and that it remains true to the desires of the client.

Sandra Vitzthum Architect, LLC

46 East State Street ● Montpelier, Vermont 05602 ● (802) 223-1806
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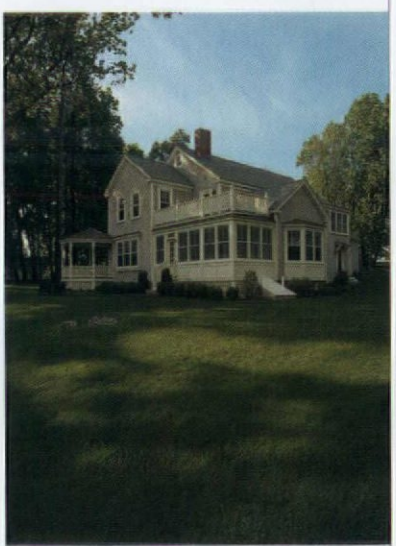
Project Location:
Marblehead, Massachusetts
Project Date: completed fall 2002
General Contractor: GF Peach Inc.



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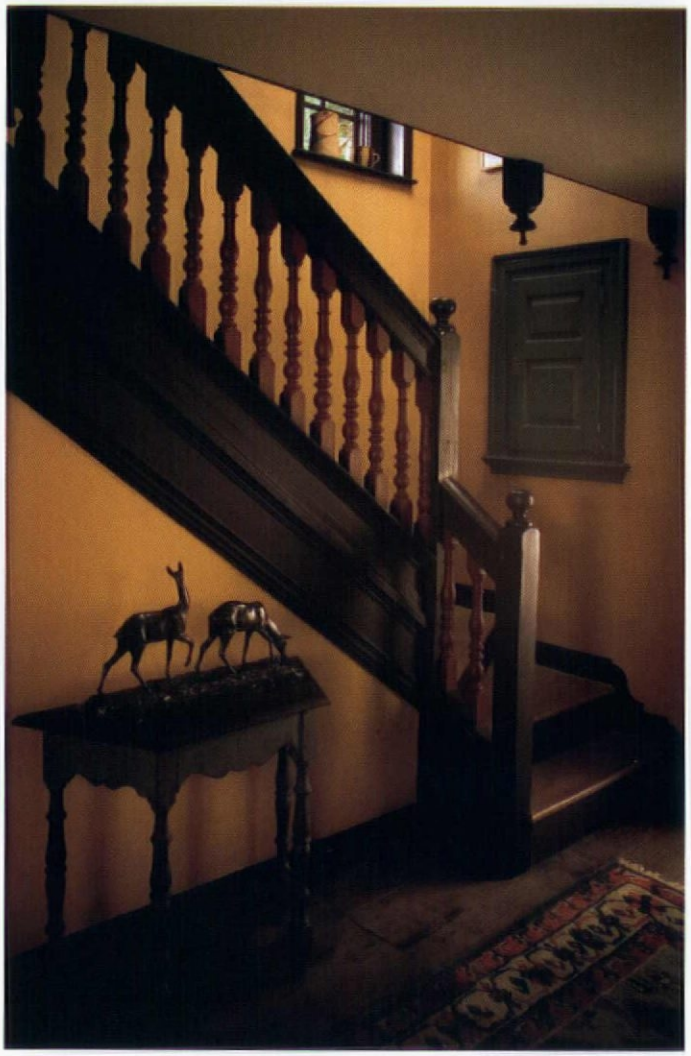

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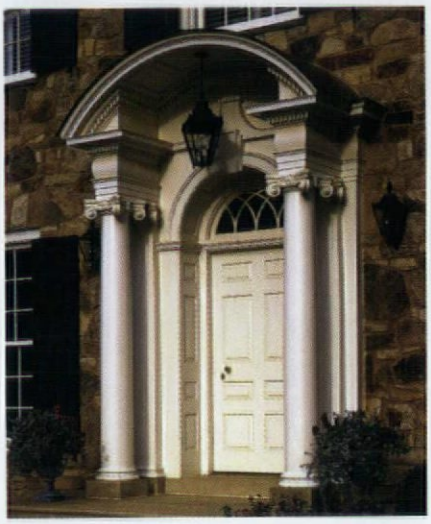

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6403 Detroit Ave. ● Cleveland, Ohio 44102 ● (216) 631-0557
(216) 631-0997 (fax) ● www.dhellison.com

Project Location: Cleveland, Ohio
Project Coordinator: Mark Murphy
Project Details: Work in progress; Private residence



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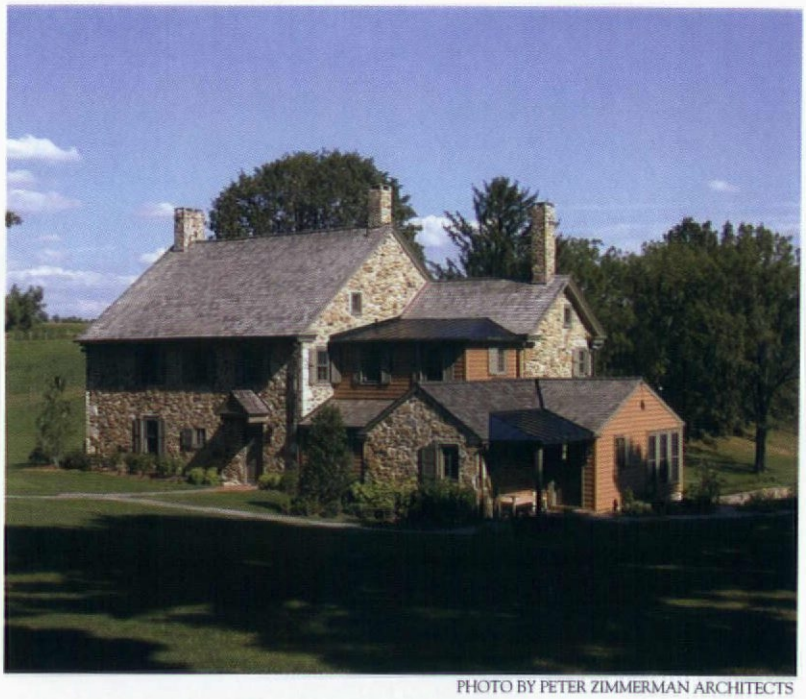

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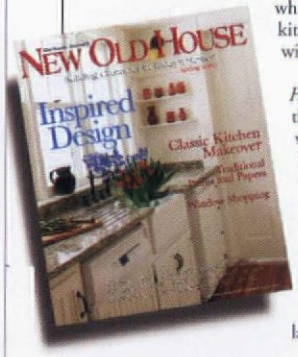

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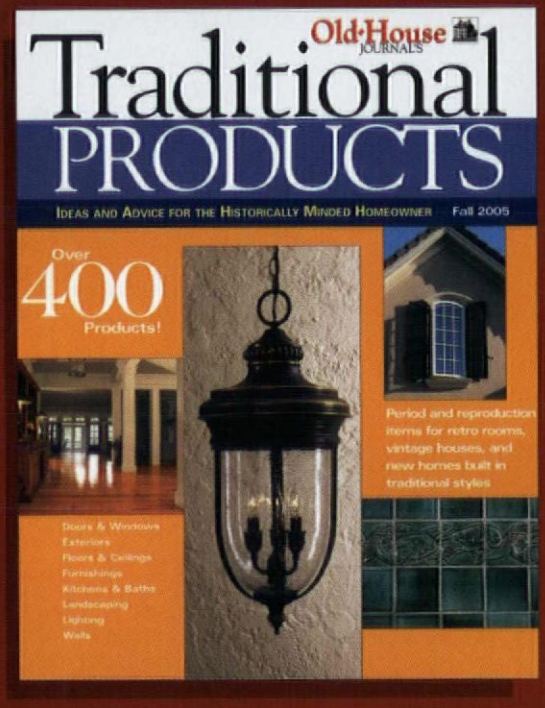

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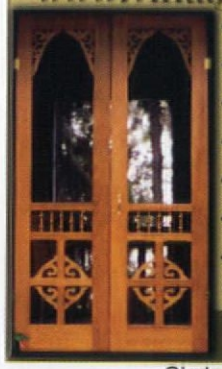

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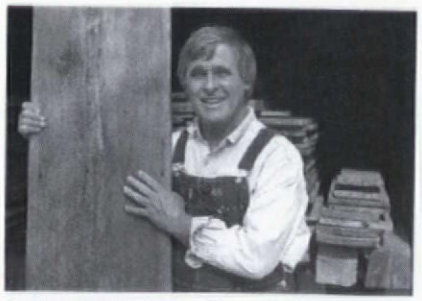

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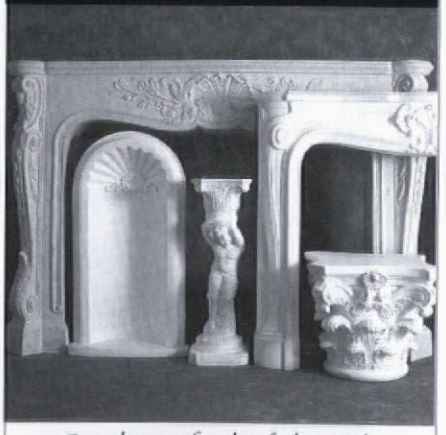

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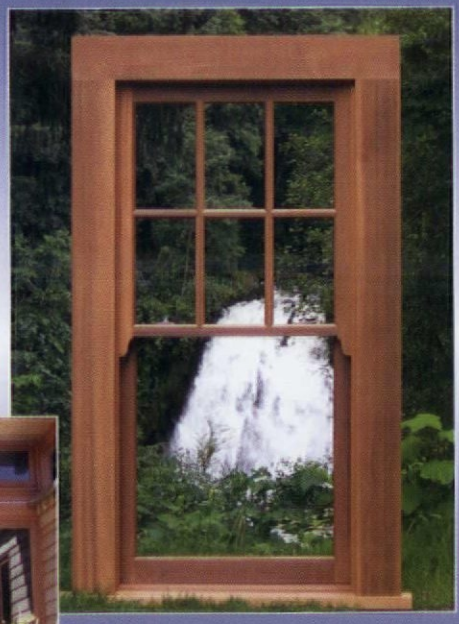

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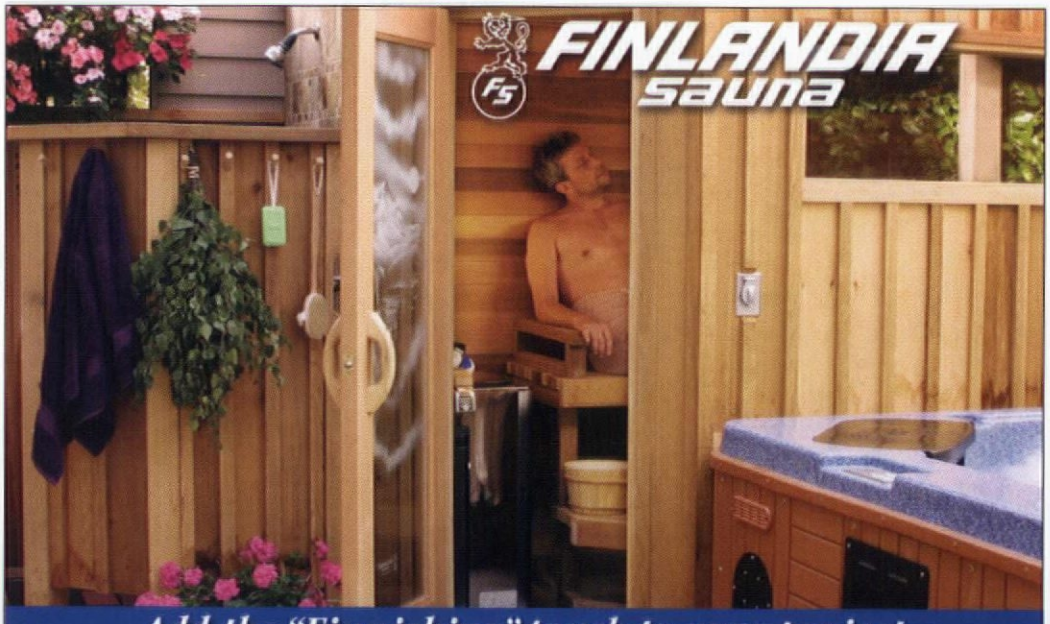

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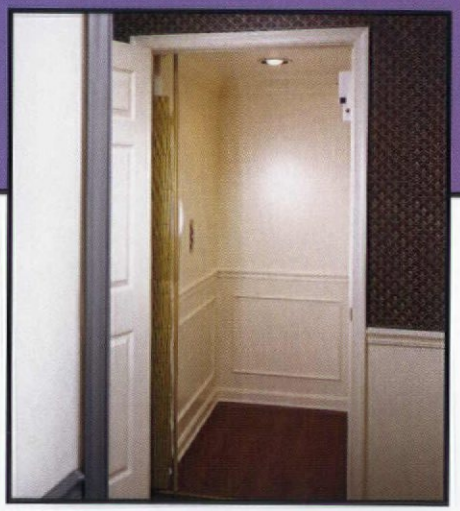

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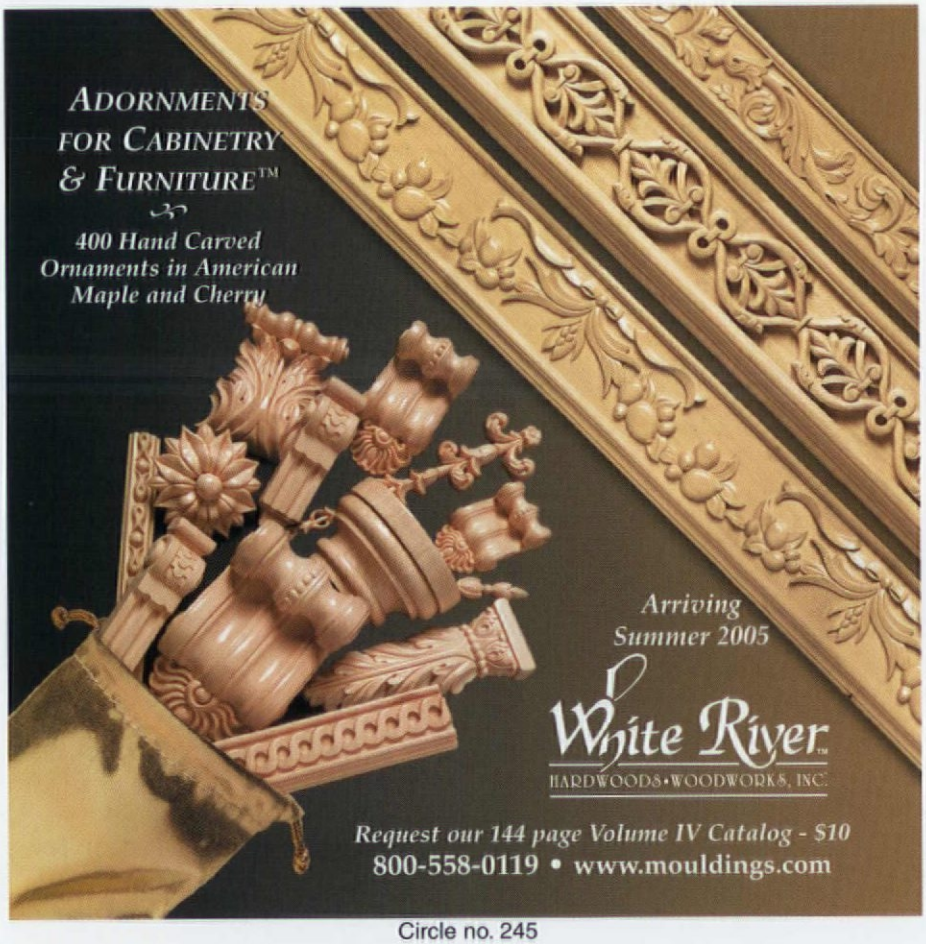

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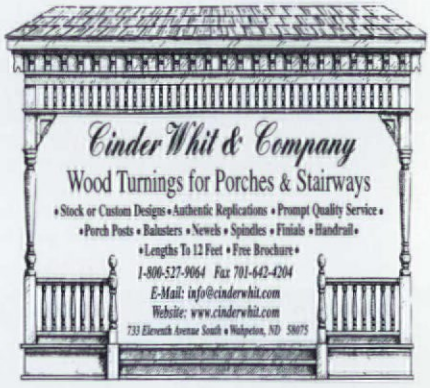

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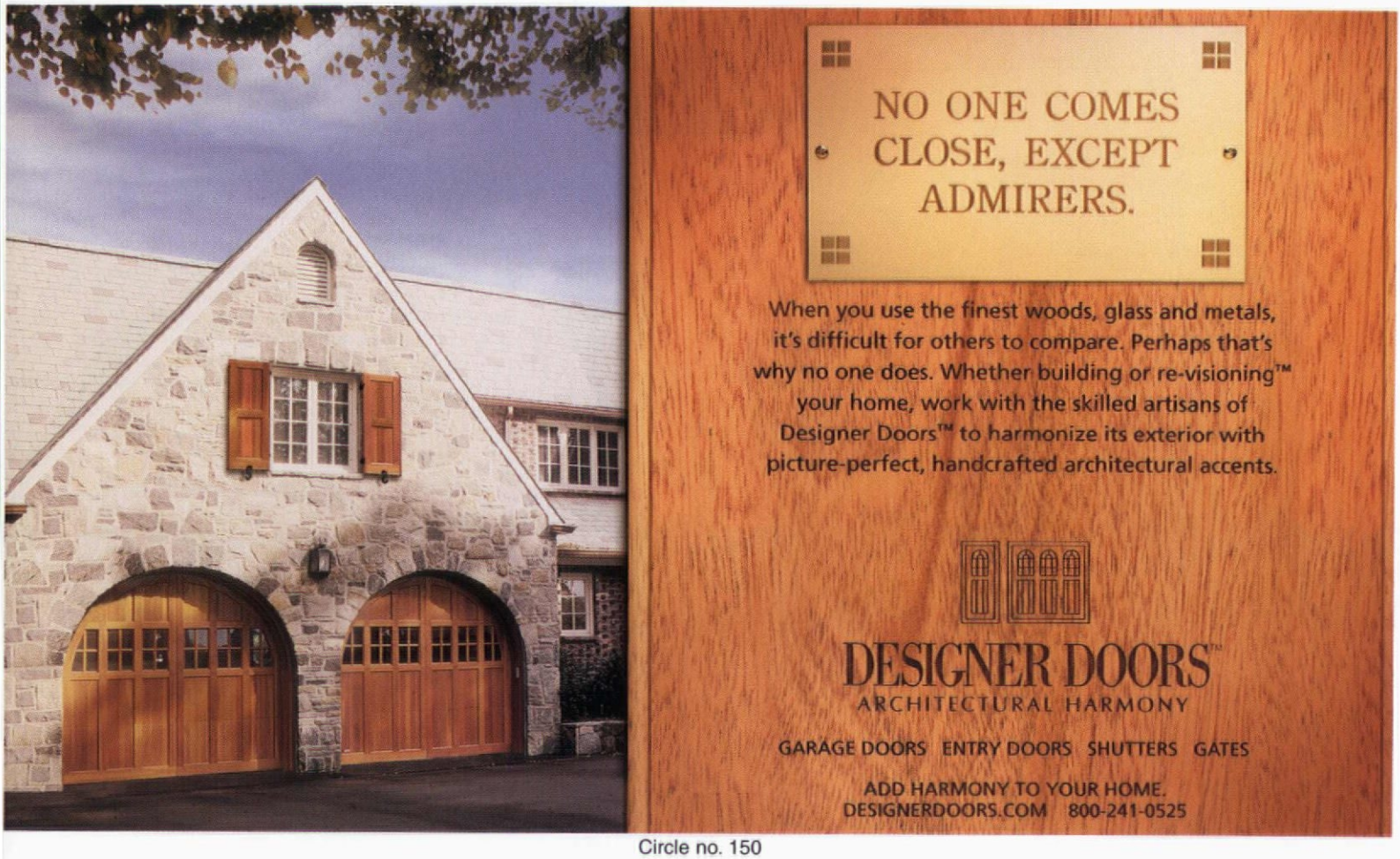

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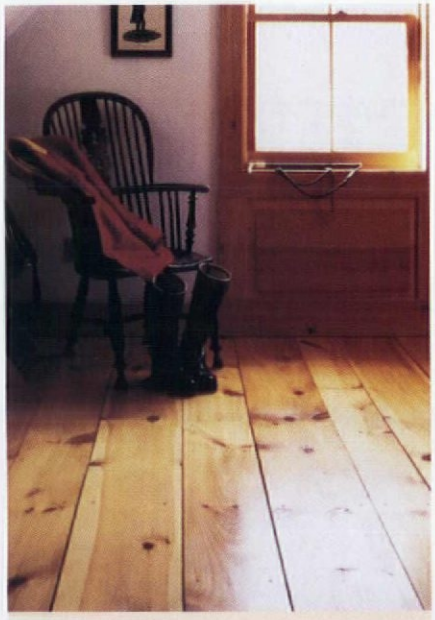

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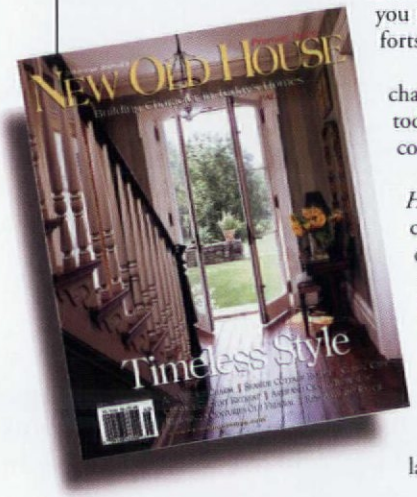

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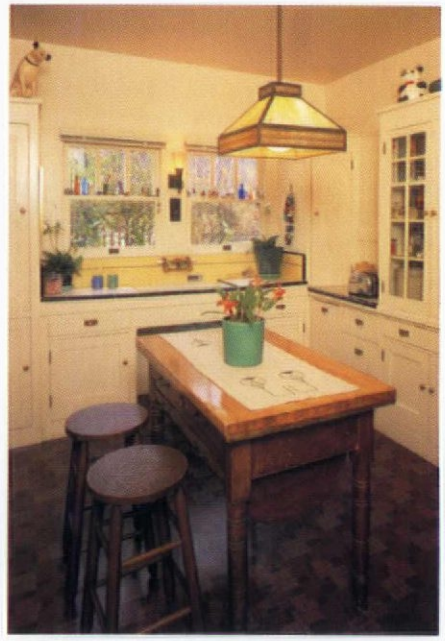

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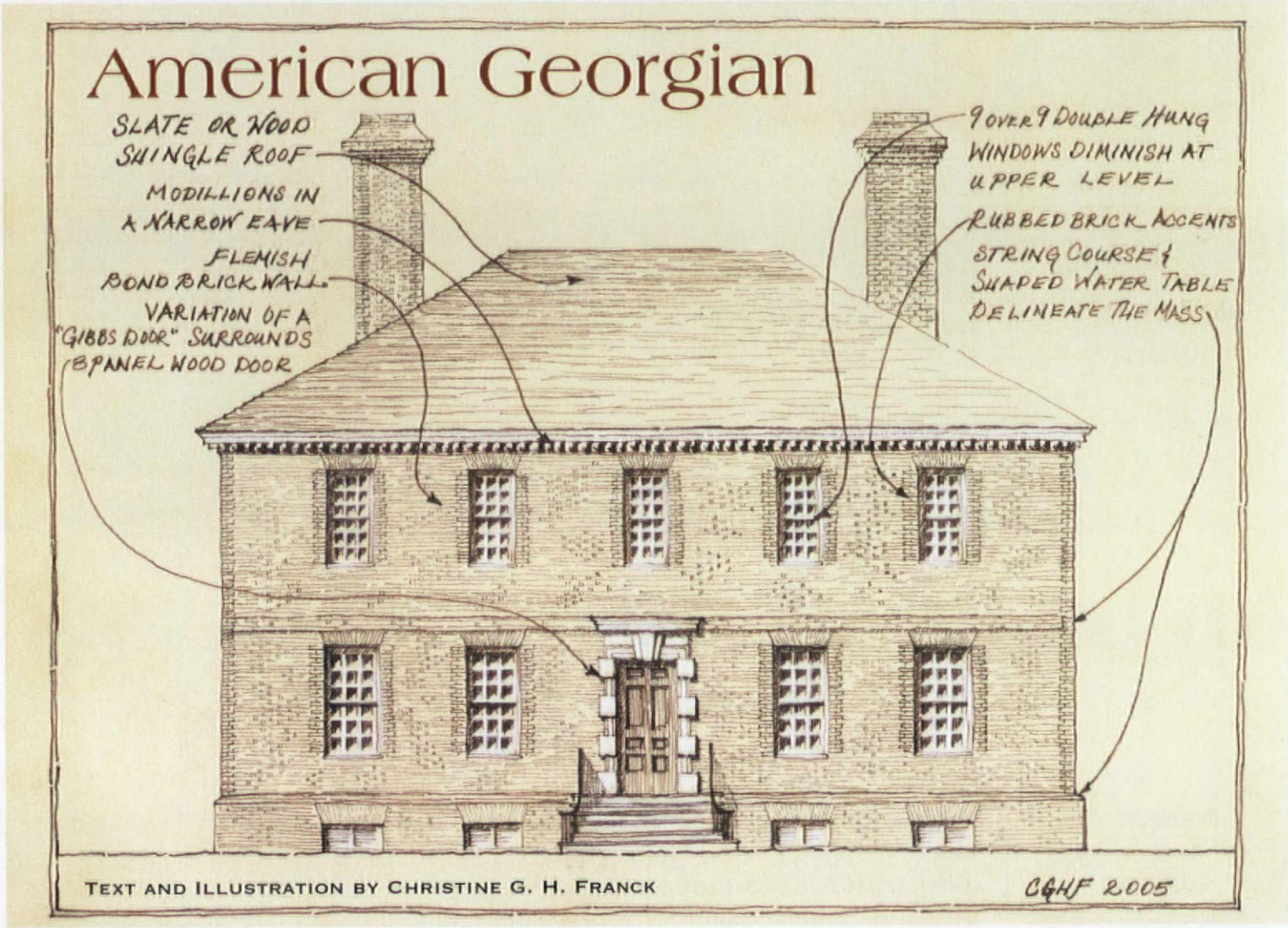


In the early days of America, English colonists built robustly beautiful homes that are often referred to as "colonial." However, Georgian, or more descriptively American Georgian, is more correct because colonial includes buildings of Spanish and French colonists. The term Georgian refers to the period of Kings George I through IV (1714–1830). Its influence is strongest prior to the revolution after which our founding fathers, particularly Jefferson, promoted Roman and Greek models of architecture in lieu of English ones in an attempt to create a more perfect American architecture.

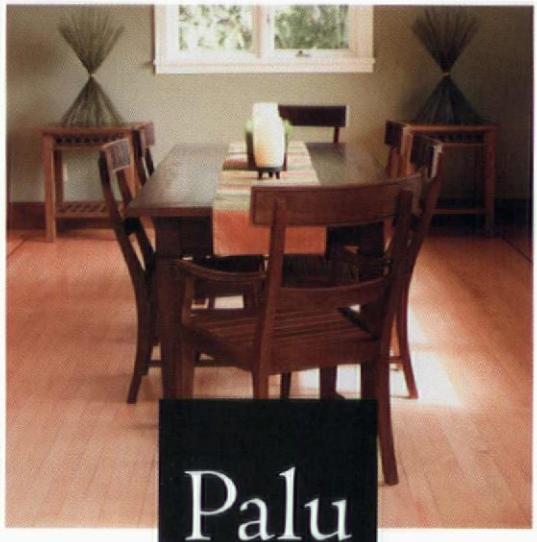
American Georgian architecture is part of a conversation that began in the temples of ancient Rome; was developed by Palladio in *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura;* continued in Georgian England; and arrived on our shores by the mid-eighteenth century when craftsmen were using English builder books, such as Gibbs' *Book of Architecture* (1728). Great American houses, such as Westover and Drayton Hall, owe their appearance to this centuries-long conversation. And, though, these houses varied greatly from North to South and in character from Baroque to Palladian, they were all tied by a common classical root.

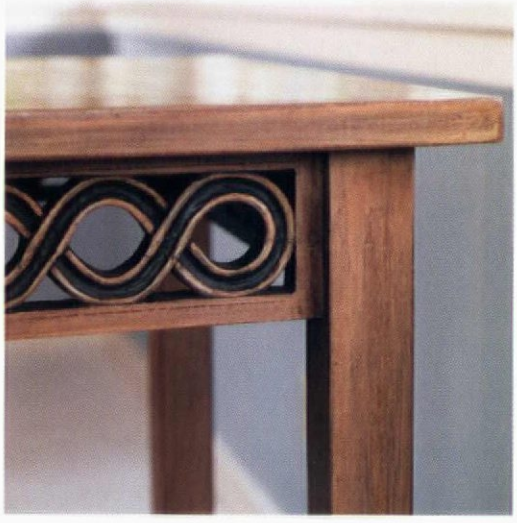
A simple rectangular mass, generally two and a half stories high, two-rooms deep with a center hall, and five to seven bays wide, the American Georgian house is a spare form ornamented with restraint. Roofs varied, with more steeply pitched gambrel, hipped, or gabled roofs in the North and hipped, clipped hipped, or gabled roofs in the South. This style's beauty resides in its proportions and symmetrical disposition. Windows were double-hung wood sashes with heavy muntins and small panes of glass (typically 9 over 9 or 12 over 12) and aligned one atop the other, often with narrower, shorter upper windows. The most expressive aspect of these houses was the entry. Often copied directly from pattern books, entries were created with elaborate classical details and occasionally with a transom or fanlight. Equally important were the materials used. In the North, wood siding predominates, most often beveled or lapped clapboard. Brick was more typical in the South—often Flemish bond, with glazed headers and rubbed or gauged brick at openings. Interiors varied less than exteriors but were also well proportioned and detailed. Walls were typically paneled; mantelpieces were the highlight.

There is a uniquely American spirit in these houses—a spirit that borrows freely from what is best, adapts it creatively in difficult conditions, and forges something wholly new that nonetheless embodies immutable ideals. In the case of the American Georgian house, beauty is that ideal. An excellent resource is *Great Georgian Houses of America, Volumes I and II* as reprinted by Dover Publications. NOH









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