

VICTORIAN HOMES

Building a New Victorian

ELEGANT VALANCE IDEAS

SUMMER LIGHTS *on* MARTHA'S VINEYARD

SALVAGE SECRETS

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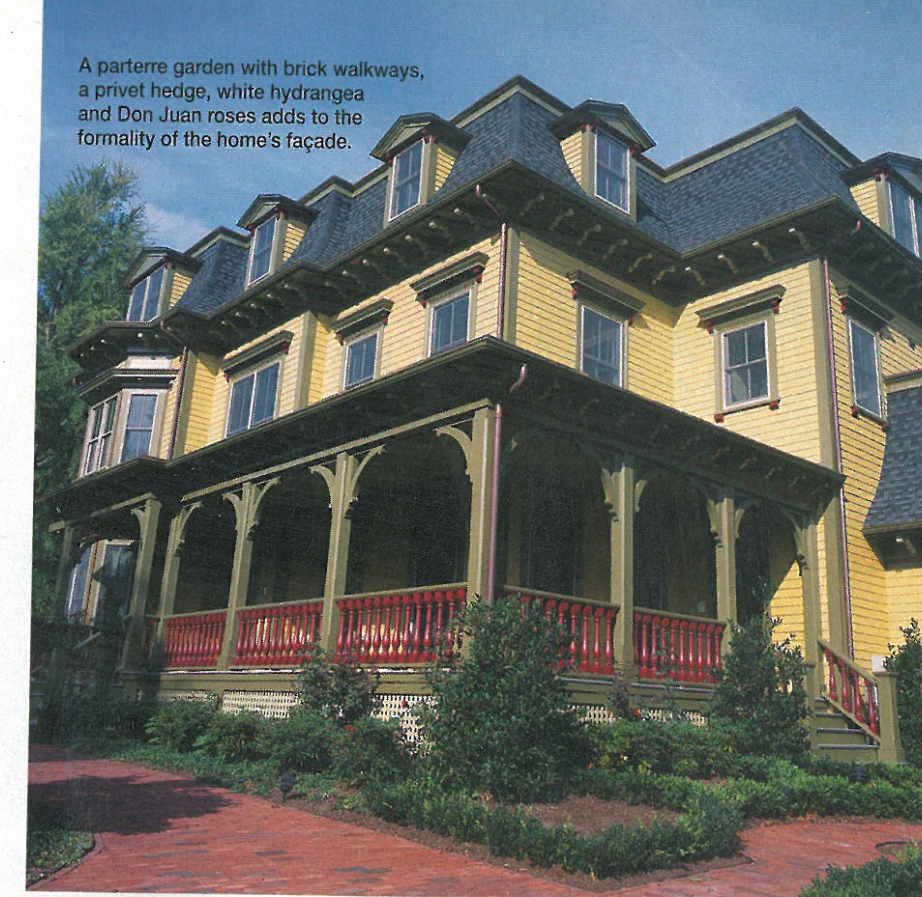


Building Character

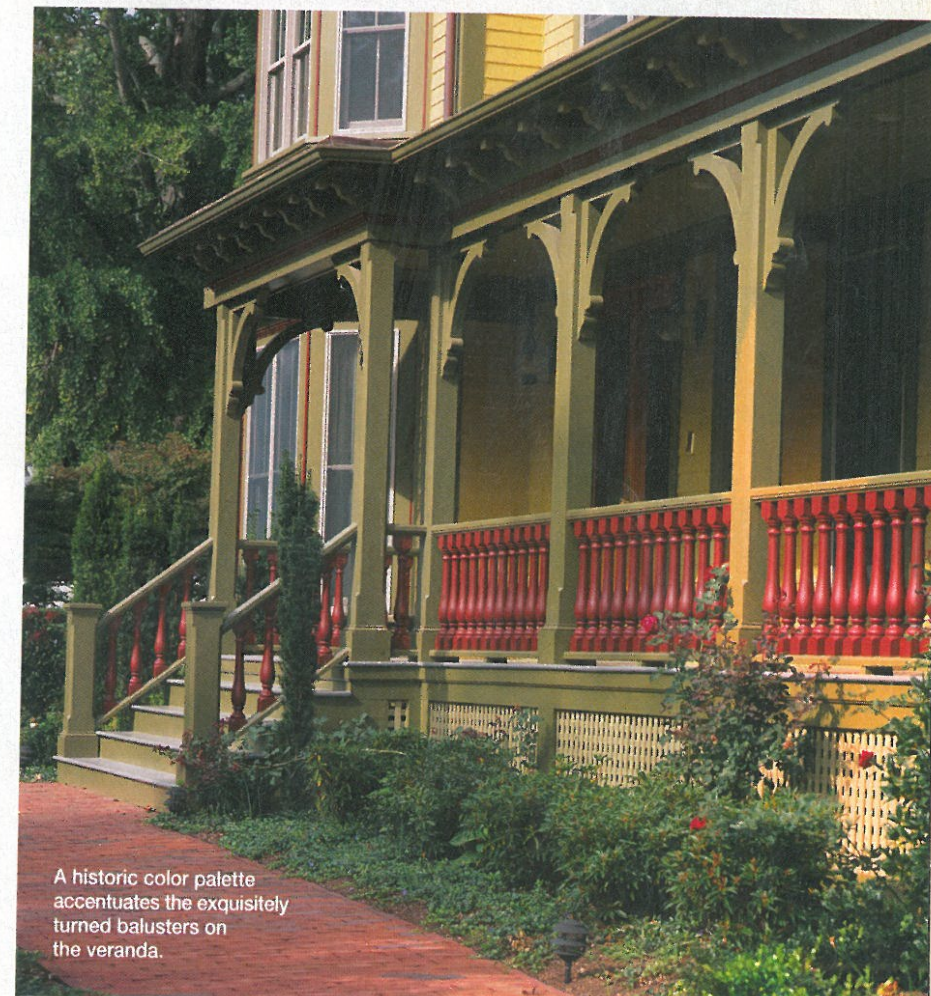
The newly constructed home celebrates the Second Empire style, which was made popular by Napoleon III between 1852 and 1870. Classic elements include a mansard roof supported by corbels and a veranda with stylized railings and balusters.

A new Victorian home in Newport, Rhode Island quietly blends into its Gilded Age surroundings and revels in mistaken identity.

By Cheryl Hackett-Galvin
Photographs by Kindra Clineff



A parterre garden with brick walkways, a privet hedge, white hydrangea and Don Juan roses adds to the formality of the home's façade.



A historic color palette accentuates the exquisitely turned balusters on the veranda.

Seldom does a For Sale sign appear on a vacant parcel in Newport, Rhode Island. So scarce is land in the City-by-the-Sea that moments after realtors announced a historic lot was up for grabs in the spring of 2000, a bidding war ensued. Within 24 hours, a handful of hopefuls were vehemently vying for three-quarters of an acre nestled in the heart of the Kay

Street/Catherine Street/Old Beach Road District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. When the dust settled, the only person left standing was Mark Horan, a custom homebuilder with a penchant for 19th-century architecture.

When Horan first surveyed the property, he could not help but admire the scattered remains of a Victorian estate that originally presided on the

grounds before being ravaged by fire in 1973. Peeking through an entanglement of overgrown brush was an antiquated brick wall and august copper beech and linden trees set in place by a wealthy railroad financier more than a century ago. Those precious links to the past helped inspire Horan to build a historically sensitive residence in the 2,800-acre neighborhood, which already lays claim to 129 significant buildings.

Bric-a-Brac Hall

When noted 19th-century architect Richard Morris Hunt and his client Henry G. Marquand first surveyed the very same plot in the early 1870s, Newport was in the midst of a building boom. As mega-wealthy industrialists were erecting colossal mansions along legendary Bellevue Avenue, moderately wealthy intellectuals from Boston and Philadelphia were building impressive

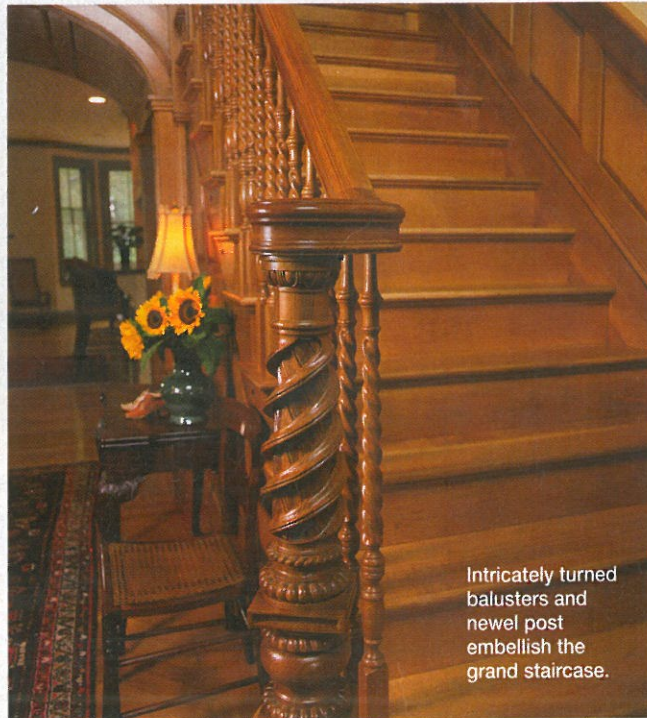


Left: Horan frequents shops throughout New England searching for antiques to furnish his new home. The living room is appointed with an antique parlor set and mantel, a vintage hand-painted Asian cabinet and a period-reproduction chandelier.

Opposite: A raised panel oak archway forms a graceful transition between the home's formal and informal living spaces.



The handsome Eastlake walnut mantel pairs beautifully with the home's extensive quarter-sawn white oak moldings and millwork.



Intricately turned balusters and newel post embellish the grand staircase.





The formal dining room celebrates Victorian style with classic white raised panels, decorative moldings, antique furnishings and delicate white lace drapery.

residences just a few blocks away. Prolific architects such as George Champlin Mason, Dudley Newton and McKim, Mead and White transformed Newport into an architectural laboratory, where many vernaculars were tested and perfected. Extraordinary examples of Italianate, Stick Style and Queen Anne homes abounded along the quiet country lanes leading to Easton's Beach from Bellevue Avenue.

Hunt's vision for his longtime friend, Marquand, was a massive three-and-a-half-story home distinguished by a central timber-framed gable with a corbeled balcony and a granite ashlar, patterned brick and wood façade. Although Linden Gate struck a commanding Gothic pose, the home was better known as "Bric-a-brac Hall." Apparently, Marquand, who also served as the president of the Board of

Trustees of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, had an appetite for collecting and jammed every nook and cranny of his home with objets d'art.

In 1895, architectural critic Montgomery Schuyler hailed Linden Gate as being, "a vigorous and individual piece of work." Interestingly enough, more than a century later, the newest owner of the famed Old Beach Road property would echo the sentiment. Says Horan, "When I purchased the land I hoped to build an original home that incorporated the best the Victorian era had to offer with a floor plan and amenities necessary for today's lifestyle."

A Modern Interpretation

For as long as Horan can remember he has been drawn to the artistry and craftsmanship of the 19th century. As a boy growing up on Cape Cod, he lived

in a rambling turn-of-the-century Shingle-style home overlooking Nantucket Sound. Horan says, "I loved the details in that house, such as the turret, the second-story porches and the gambrel roof." As a teenager, he became acquainted with the building trade by framing houses for his family's real estate development company. After college, Horan settled in Newport and established his own building firm. He says, "I love the wide variety of building styles and enjoy touring and studying historic homes."

Inevitably, Newport's rich architectural heritage leaves an indelible mark on those residing in the island community. Horan's clients often request houses that recall the charm of the Victorian era. Over the years, Horan Building Company has built numerous homes that incorporate period-inspired



Above: The kitchen combines the best of both worlds. Modern appliances and granite counters are married with a copper hood, custom cabinets, hardware and lighting that evoke a vintage look.

Right: Corbels with hand-carved leaves and scrolls support the counters in the kitchen with style.



The master bedroom opens onto a second-story porch and features a marble bathroom and a gas fireplace. An antique wicker teacart, floral bedding and matching chaise lounge are some Victorian touches.



embellishments such as fretwork, moldings and millwork. Along the way, Horan also restored two 19th-century homes, which deepened his appreciation for the meticulous attention to detail exhibited long ago.

When Horan was ready to build his own residence, he hoped to bring the concept of a new Victorian to the next level. He says, "I wanted to build a house that looked like it had been there for more than a hundred years." His first inclination was to construct a Southern-style colonial home. However, the city's height ordinance forced him to reconfigure his plans. The alternative was a 7,800-square-foot, three-story Second Empire-style home with a mansard roof and veranda.

Soon after the home's exterior was completed and adorned with a Benjamin Moore historic paint palette of autumn gold, sage, alligator green and cottage red, many a passerby automatically assumed the stately home was just another restoration in progress—a common sight in this district. Horan says, "Each case of mistaken identity is the best compliment I could receive."

Structurally, the interior of the home boasts many Old World features including a grand staircase, ceiling arches, flooring, doors, wainscoting, molding and millwork crafted from quarter-sawn white oak. Horan enlisted the help of local interior designer Carolyn Schmitz to select a spirited combination of furnishings, wall coverings

and window treatments that best reflect the young bachelor's tastes.

When visitors pass through the solid oak and beveled-glass entry doors they note the intricately turned newel post and balusters of the staircase in the foyer, which closely resemble those found in neighboring estates. Even though the formal living room features a dramatic bay window and crown moldings, the focal point of the room is a fireplace fitted with an antique walnut mantel salvaged from a home in nearby Providence.

The formal dining room is located on the opposite side of the foyer and is adorned with plaster crown moldings, white raised panels and a crimson damask wallpaper. An antique repro-

duction crystal chandelier with frosted and etched glass globes illuminates the room with pure Victorian elegance.

The gourmet kitchen and family room are situated just beyond the formal rooms and overlook the park-like grounds. Sleek stainless-steel appliances happily coexist with custom cabinetry painted ivory with an olive glaze, seeded glass inserts, brass wire inserts, reproduction antique brass hardware and granite counters supported by carved wooden corbels. Similar white custom cabinetry also distinguishes the butler's pantry next to the kitchen.

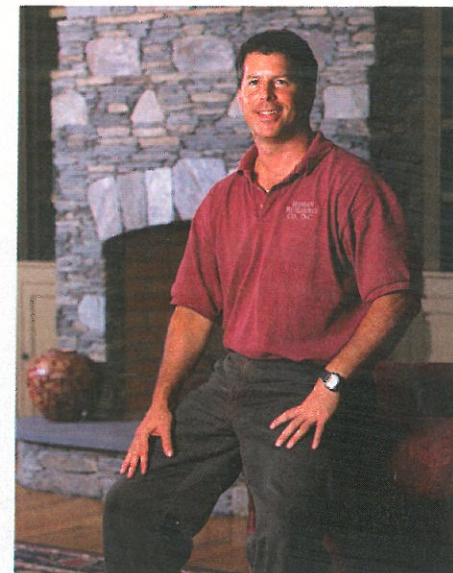
The second and third stories of the home include eight large bedrooms and bathrooms decorated with an eclectic mix of new and antique furniture and accessories. The master bedroom suite is indeed a study in luxury. The retreat has a romantic open porch and a dual-view gas fireplace that can be viewed from the bedroom and from the whirlpool tub in the marble bathroom. Aside from the first-class amenities, perhaps what makes the master bedroom suite so unique is its poignant view of a 130-year-old copper beech tree that belonged to the original Linden Gate estate. Whether you admire the magnificent relic from the room's expansive windows while resting on a chaise lounge or peer over the porch rails from a wicker seat, you cannot help but ponder the beauty and grace of a bygone era.

A Neo-Victorian Verdict

Richard Guy Wilson, a professor at the University of Virginia, author of several books on 19th- and 20th-century architecture and host of A&E's *America's Castles*, came recently to meet Horan and tour his new home. Wilson says, "This neo-Victorian fits very well into the neighborhood. Horan's house illuminates how much better understood is the architecture of the 19th century. He looked very carefully at actual houses and pattern books to create the exterior. Spatially, the interior of the house is contemporary and represents modern living. Victorian fragments, such as the antique fireplace mantel and light fixtures, and high-quality reproductions add to the home's ambience." ❁

Building Character

"Each case of mistaken identity is the best compliment I could receive."



Mark Horan's meticulous attention to detail reflects the building philosophy of the Victorian period.

Fancy Fretwork

Whether you are renovating an old home or planning to build a new Victorian, chances are your project requires custom moldings and millwork that closely resembles their 19th-century counterparts. Paul Miller of Wahle's Wood Works and Mouldings Inc. in Union, Missouri offers readers the following suggestion: "When looking for a custom architectural millwork company, choose

one that offers a full line of products to complete your home. Be sure they are knowledgeable regarding the type of woods used and their properties. Select a company that offers many styles of casings, baseboards, crown moldings in straight, as well as plan and elevation radius patterns."

Here are a sampling of companies that specialize in duplicating period moldings and millwork:

- Anthony Wood Products**, (800) 969-2181; or visit www.anthonywoodinc.com.
- Architectural Wood Turnings**, (281) 412-9418; or visit www.architecturalwoodturnings.com.
- Cinder Whit & Company**, (800) 527-9064; or visit www.cinderwhit.com.
- Cumberland Woodcraft Co.**, (800) 367-1884; or visit www.cumberlandwoodcraft.com.
- Custom Wood Turnings**, (860) 767-3326.
- Empire Wood Works**, (800) 360-2119.
- The Gingerbread Man**, (530) 622-0550; or visit www.gingerbreadman.com.
- New England Woodworking Co.**, (401) 841-5544; or visit www.newwoodworking.com.
- Touchstone Woodworks**, (330) 297-1313; or visit www.touchstonewoodworks.com.
- Vintage Woodworks**, (903) 356-2158; or visit www.vintagewoodworks.com.
- Wahles Wood Works and Mouldings Inc.**, (636) 583-1133; or visit www.wahles@yhti.net.
- Ware Craft**, (800) 299-1320; or visit www.patiolaceusa.com.



Millwork companies can easily recreate antique woodwork. These balusters and railings were modeled after those found on the porch of a 19th-century home in Rhode Island.