

CONTEMPORARY CRAFTS FOR THE HOME



FEATURING WINNERS OF THE AMERICAN CRAFTS AWARDS

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Title Page: 2" square stoneware tiles for fireplace border by Barbara
Archer/Barry Rhodes. Photo © 1988 Bard Wrisley.

Contents Page: (top left) "The House Chair" by Anderson/Schwartz; (top right)
stair railing by Chris Hughes; (bottom left) hand-painted silk charmeuse jacquard
by Sissi Siska; (bottom right) "American Krishna" by Thomas McCanna.

Page 6: forged stair railing by David A. Ponsler.

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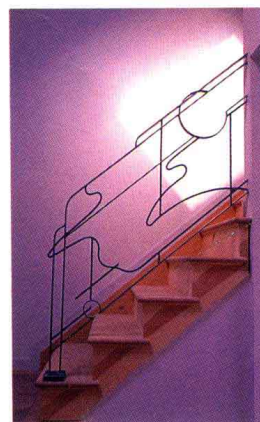
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KRAUS SIKES INC.



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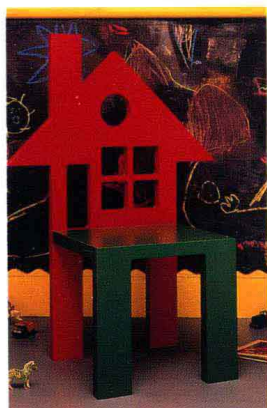
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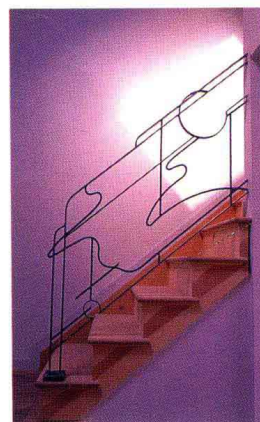
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FOREWORD

AS I WRITE THESE WORDS, MY MIND IS DRIFTING TO THE GRANITE-bounded coast of Maine where I will be in two days, and where my family and I have just finished building and furnishing a winterized summer home.

Even as I sit here, 500 miles away, I can walk through every room, brush my hand over the glossy surface of craftsman Joe Tracy's dining room table, sit in contemplation of stone artist Jeff Gammelin's monumental granite fireplace, or steam the seaward windows while gazing across landscaper Pat Chasse's undulating stone terrace.

These three craftsmen were the core of a team I assembled to bring texture to a dream house which Robert Venturi would design and which would incorporate much of the natural surrounding stone and wood in its interior details.

Because from the very outset I was involved in selecting the artists and artisans and then oversaw the evolution of a million details, it is not a difficult task to sit in my Manhattan office and simultaneously prowl the painted maple floors of a shingle house in Maine. And the process was as exciting as the result. Learning to trust one's own amateur instincts, daring to disagree with a master and—equally—daring to trust that someone else's eccentric vision would somehow fit.

It would all have been different if this had been an “instant house” project: you know, just add money and stir. A house can be such a subtle manifestation of personal style and taste, but only if the client is intimately involved in thinking how he wants to live, sharing with others that vision, and then commenting actively on the artistic responses as they evolve.

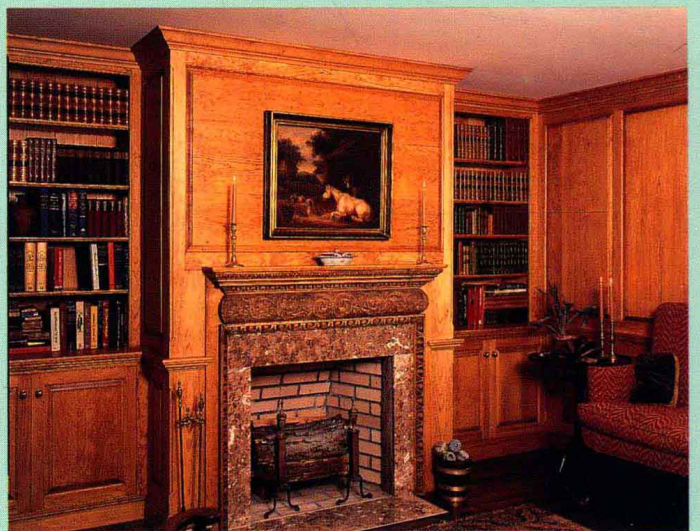
Our first house warming event was held for the two hundred people who helped to build our dream. At the door we greeted each contributor with a special name tag attached to a slice of red cedar shingle. The tags read, “Joe Tracy—wood,” “Jeff Gammelin—stone,” etc. My young daughters' subscripts read “demolition.” Many

craftsmen brought their spouses and inevitably guided them to their own handrail or counter top or cabinet door. It was overwhelming to think how much loving labor had gone into producing our home, and the sense of painstaking love is what persists so happily for us today.

I wish each reader of this fine book the same joy in crafting a home of his or her own.

David Rockefeller, Jr.

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PERSONAL SIGNATURES

NOT ONLY CAN YOU GO HOME AGAIN, YOU DO go home again—and again and again. More and more people are doing just that. As Americans search for a sanctuary in this fast-paced world, we are looking homeward to find it. The home has taken on a new significance as we are spending increasing amounts of time there—enjoying family, entertaining friends, sometimes working, and often just relaxing.

The home seems to be providing something beyond being a simple refuge; it is the place that we can make a footprint, put our stamp, inscribe our personal signature. The home is a singular place now as we put more time, energy, and money into personalizing it.

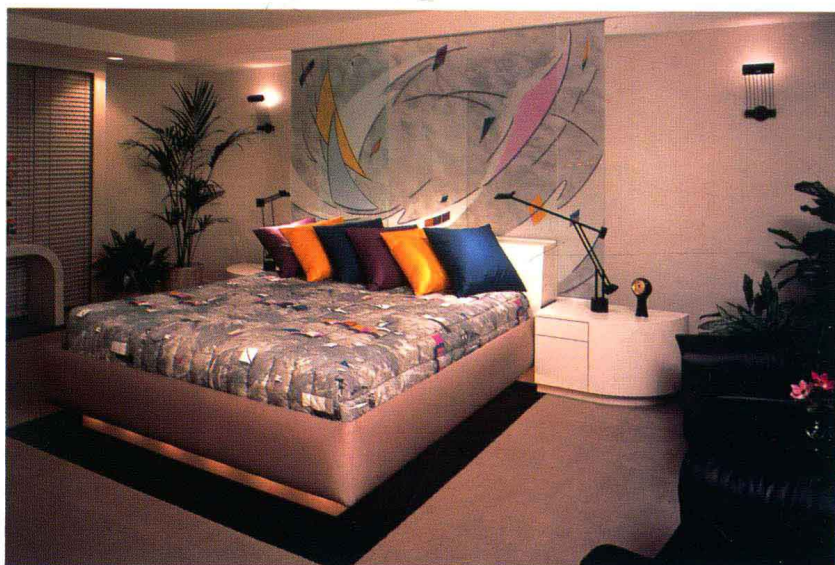
The industrial revolution and mass production brought good things to many people as factories poured out an enormous variety of consumer goods at affordable prices, but it was not an unalloyed blessing. We paid a price for its contributions. It gave us a kind of a cookie-cutter world where variety was sacrificed to the efficiencies that attend making many copies of the same

Hand-crafted work inscribes its own personal signature. Sherry Schreiber's landscape tapestry (top) in an Adirondack-inspired home, Chris Hughes' railing (bottom left), Rodger Reid's pine library (bottom center), and Gregg Lipton's queen size bed and side table all individualize the spaces they occupy.



This page: Ayalah Sorkin "signs" her vibrantly colored rug entitled "Celebration" (top). It is 6' x 9' and hand-tufted of 100% wool pile. "Whoops," the glass art painting over the bed (right) by Nancy Gong is made of sheet glass which has been etched, carved, and painted with lead accents.

Opposite page: Gregg Lipton's standing mirror (top) is on a satinwood and purpleheart frame. The clock by Todd Noe (bottom) is on a bed of plate glass with a nickel plated, brass core for the quartz movement.



thing. What we are seeing now is counter-revolution to the industrial revolution.

If keeping up with the Joneses was a benchmark of the style imposed by mass production—where our ambition was to have exactly what our neighbor had—what we are now seeing is something more introspective. The Joneses are fine, and they should do their thing to their heart's content. But each of us has different, complicated psychic needs and tastes. So now what we do is look inward first, instead of looking next door, and then build an environment for what we find when we look at ourselves.

One of the major manifestations of this counter-movement has been a return to the crafts world for things that are products of the head and the hand and the heart, objects that are unique, work that bears the personal signature of the artist. The evident presence of the human hand draws us back to values believed to be lost, as we turn away from the trendy in search of the enduring. We have re-discovered the love of materials, the joy of singularity, the pleasure of a thing well made.

This has been a boon to the crafts field, reminiscent of the Arts and Crafts movement at the turn of the century. It has brought increased recognition to those artists who have been working quietly on the sidelines for so long. Today, a growing nucleus of artists and artisans are creating exciting products for our homes. They are producing work that is made of traditional materials using traditional techniques as well as pieces crafted in unexpected ways with innovative materials.

As the search for personalization of the home has become widespread, contemporary craft artists are available and ready to fill the burgeoning demand for the unusual, the commissioned, the unique, and the hand-crafted. Their work can be purchased through galleries, retail shops, and the growing number of home furnishing stores that specialize in things unique. Artists will often sell their work directly too, either at craft fairs or right out of their studios.

There are many reasons for this placement of signatures in the places where we live. The most important is that our living spaces are being designed and crafted with the goal of articulating a personality rather than a pre-ordained, systematic decorating style. The “combination” living room—

