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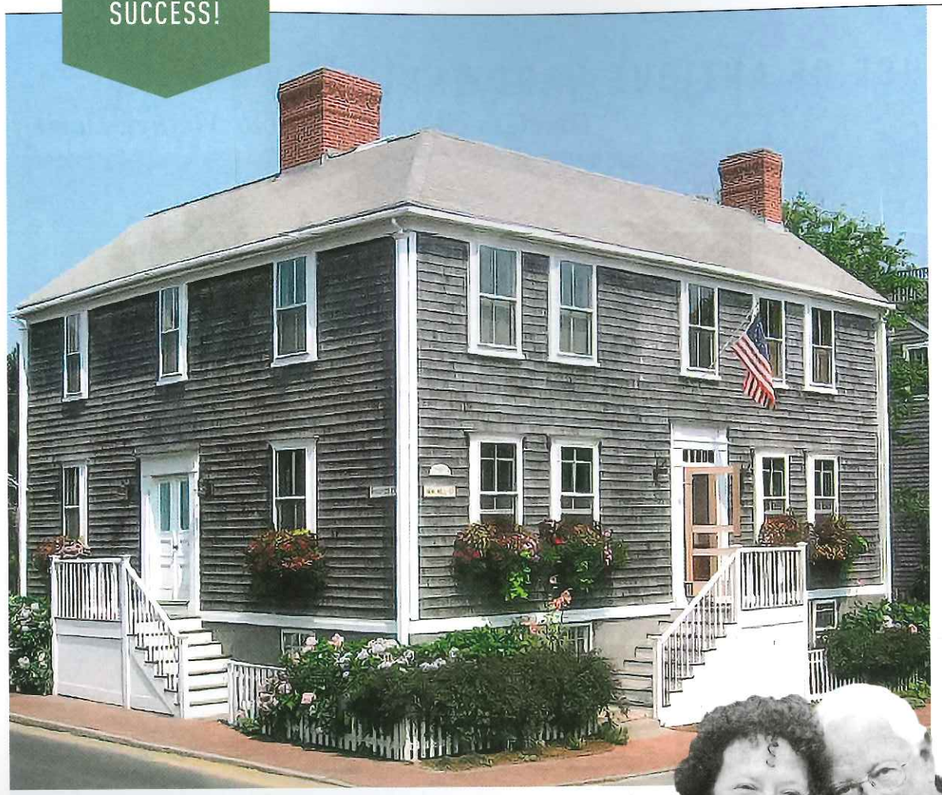


AN OLD NANTUCKET HOUSE

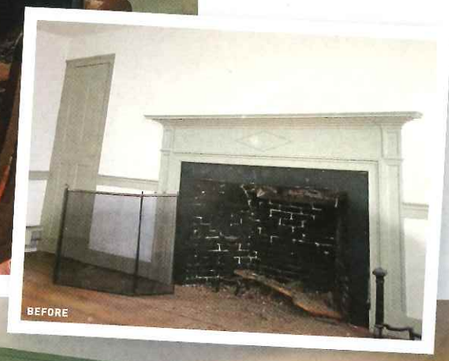
This family was on a mission to revive and protect the historic 1809 structure. **By Mary Bergman, with Esta-Lee & Harris Stone**

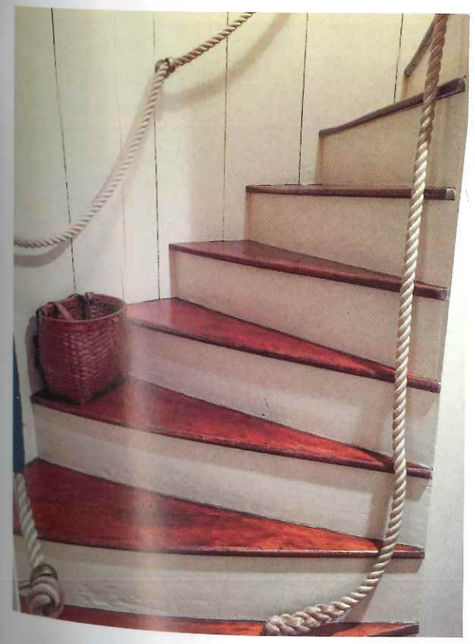
On Nantucket Island off the Cape Cod coast in Massachusetts, quaint cobblestone streets and sandy beaches make for a booming real-estate market. The high turnover threatens the island's more than 800 pre-Civil War era homes. Every year, more are gutted and their original building materials carted away for disposal. Preservation is an uphill battle.

So I'm happy to share a successful rescue. Esta-Lee and Harris Stone set out to find a historic home that needed restoration and protection. The 1809 house they fell in love with was in serious need of repair. It had most recently been a boardinghouse, and many elements had faded or been covered up. The very foundation required repointing and new stucco. Fireplaces and transoms had been boarded up; floors were dirty, scratched, and dull; plaster walls were cracked; all the mechanicals needed upgrading.

"The first time we walked through the house with potential contractor Mickey Rowland," says Esta-Lee, "he warned, 'if you're interested in gutting this house, then I'm not your guy'. That's when I knew he was perfect for the job."

OPPOSITE Built near the curb, the old house has typical Nantucket entry steps. The former boardinghouse required a great deal of restoration. **INSET** Homeowners Esta-Lee and Harris Stone. **LEFT** The right-side parlor has plain trim, all original. **BELOW** A top-floor bedroom fireplace during restoration. **BOTTOM LEFT** The winder staircase behind what's now the side entry is early; a more formal stair was added when the house was extended in the 19th century. **BELOW RIGHT** The wainscoted left-side parlor today.





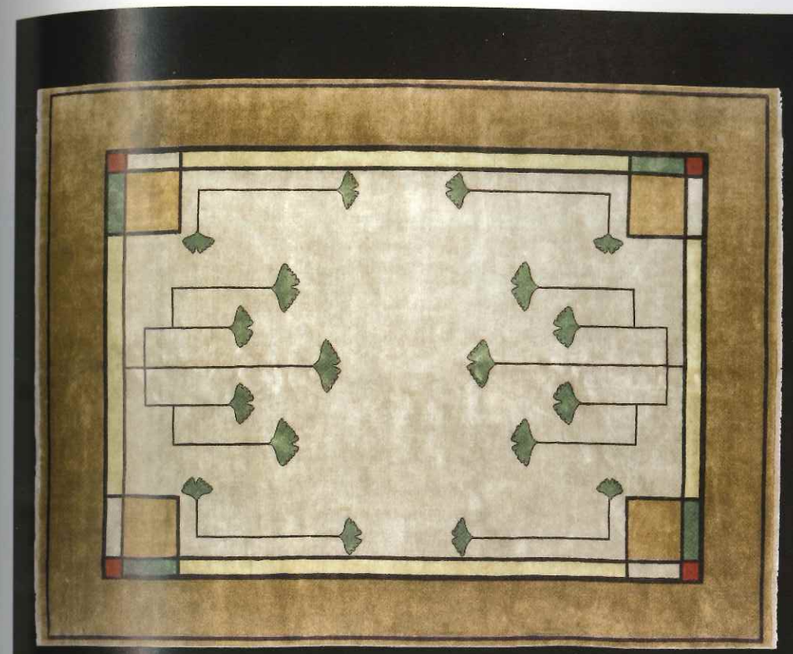
Esta-Lee and Harris had read a few books about furnishing old houses, but nothing about the nuts and bolts of restoration. They'd found preservation carpenter Sandy Kendall, who in turn recommended Milton Rowland to design the repairs. Pen Austin, an expert in repairing plaster, restoring chimneys, and refinishing floors, restored the home to its original look. Austin echoed Nantucket's whaling past by "scrimshawing" scenes into one fireplace's new plaster surround.

Now the Stones have a comfortable home; it's like visiting world travelers, not another white-on-white decorator showroom. Though the rooms are traditionally modest, the Stones give a Christmas party for 60 every year, and 13 family members of three generations spend time here during the summer.

What makes this property all the more special is that the Stones made sure the house and their little piece of Nantucket will be preserved for future generations: The Stones worked with the Nantucket Preservation Trust to put a preservation deed restriction on the property. It covers exterior and interior changes. "I walk through these rooms, and am amazed to think of how many before me have passed through the space," says Esta-Lee Stone.

MARY BERGMAN IS COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR FOR THE NANTUCKET PRESERVATION TRUST.

TOP This period mantel was salvaged from a nearby home. **ABOVE** The stove was repurposed for a basement bedroom. **RIGHT** Extra bedrooms, baths, an office, and a laundry now occupy the raised basement.



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