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Period Piece

An antique evolves over the years

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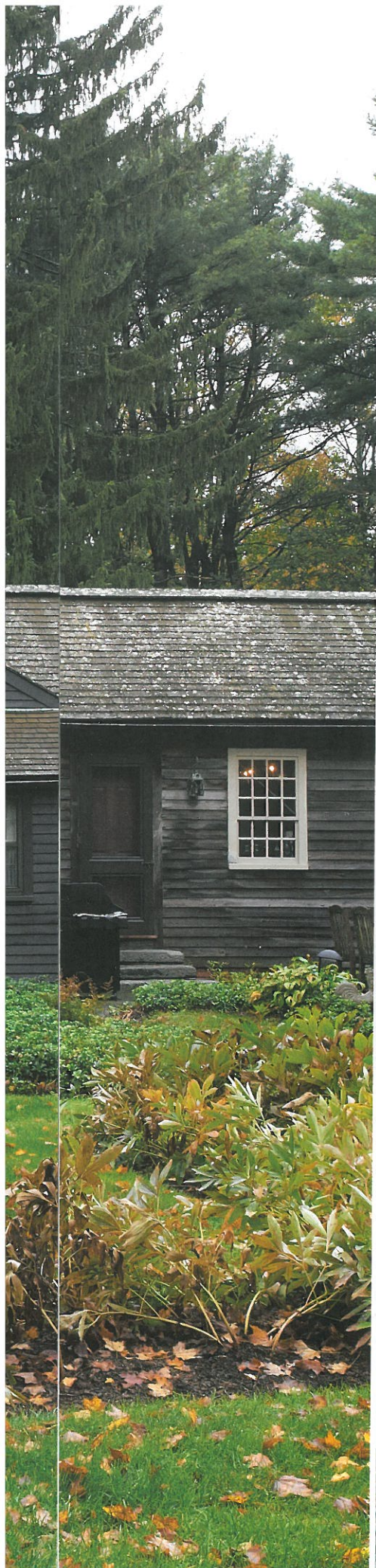
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PROUD OWNERS Linda and two daughters outside the attached barn. A jumble of baskets underneath an antique table in the foyer. From the outside, one can see how the house meanders. A view of the backyard through the breezeway connecting the house to the barn.



Some houses stand assertively on a property, others sit quietly, but Lynda Campbell and Corey Greenberg's antique home meanders. A series of connected structures built at different periods during its 220 year lifetime, it spreads out over the two-acre property in an orderly, yet almost mazelike, fashion. Despite the fact that it evolved in three stages, it manages to feel cohesive thanks to thoughtful transitions from one space to another, a consistent color palette and the fact that every room holds pieces from the couple's collection of painted furniture, folk art and Native American Indian artifacts.

The front structure is the oldest part of the house. An example of classic early colonial architecture, it dates from 1791. At that time, it contained four small rooms: two bedrooms on the second floor and a kitchen and dining room sharing a large central fireplace on the 1st floor. Many details have been preserved, including the well-worn wide plank floors, the exposed support beams, and the seven-foot ceilings. "The fact that it was so modest may explain why much of it remains intact; it wasn't worth it for anyone to renovate it," laughs Linda. Several years after the house was completed, the owner, Elijah Westcott, expanded it to a saltbox by adding a small keeping room at the back.

Around the turn of the 20th century, the owners at that time gussied it up, adding a front porch, shutters, gargoyles and other Victorian details. Then, in the 1940s, Benjamin Prins, an illustrator for the *Saturday Evening Post*, bought the house with his wife, also an artist. They removed all the Victorian details and restored it back to its original state. They also relocated the staircase to its present location off of the kitchen and enlarged the first floor footprint, pushing out the front living room by several feet and adding a half bathroom and small bedroom.



DOLLED UP The great room, part of the antique federal-style colonial relocated from Higganum, Connecticut, has a new fireplace built to look original. Native American Indian dolls from the owner's collection; a copper sink; the owners use the space linking the original house to the federal-style colonial addition as a dining area.



The house remained unchanged until 1983, when yet another owner expanded it by relocating an antique federal style colonial from Higganum, Connecticut and attaching it to the rear of the saltbox. "The builder they hired specialized in 18th century buildings and was known for taking apart a house, labeling each part, moving it to a new site and rebuilding it faithfully, piece by piece," says Lynda. However, he made changes to the original interior, leaving part of the 1st floor ceiling open to create a great room on the ground floor and a loft space, reached by stairs along a side wall, on the second floor. He also constructed a massive stone fireplace in the great room. "I don't know if the original house had a fireplace here, but this one has all the details you would find in a fireplace from that era." So tall that she can stand inside it—and she has to in order to open and close the flue—it has a beehive oven and an iron crane for suspending pots over the fire. To provide a seamless transition from the original saltbox to the new addition, the builder also added a rectangular one story room linking the two structures; this space, between the kitchen and the great room, serves as a dining area.

When the couple bought the house in 1985, they had two young daughters in tow; their third daughter was born several years later. Lynda and Corey slept in the largest of the three bedrooms on the 2nd floor of the original saltbox, while their daughters used the two smaller bedrooms and the tiny one on the first floor. They all shared the only full bathroom. When their daughters were teenagers, this arrangement became impractical. "My husband and I could never get into the bathroom," Lynda says. They hired Wilton architect Rob Sanders to design a master bedroom suite located beyond the second addition.

This third structure, reached from the great room through a transitional foyer, complements the rest of the house architecturally, and





COLLECTOR'S EYE Lynda was drawn to this patina of the painted yellow trunk. Vintage Native American woven bowls and slippers from the owner's collection. Lynda's daughter uses part of the attached barn as her floral studio. In the master bedroom, storage space has been built into the stairs to the loft.



includes a master bathroom, a walk-in closet, and a spacious bedroom with a cathedral ceiling and stairs leading up to a loft. "Although our home is situated on a busy road, the master bedroom is incredibly peaceful," Lynda admits. Large windows along the rear wall look out over a small pond with a waterfall and mature gardens. "When I was little, I spent hours sitting beside the pond at grandmother's house, watching the water bugs and frogs. I used to think that spot was the most magical place in the world. So we decided to create a pond here. The sound of the water is so soothing."

The couple's decorating style is as eclectic as their house, and like it, evolved over the years. "We didn't furnish it quickly. We took our time finding pieces we loved, and knew would work," says Lynda. Their extensive collections of antique and hand-crafted painted furniture, folk art, and Native American Indian artifacts, on display in every room, unify the three sections of the house. So does the consistent color scheme, a palette of turquoise, salmon, and yellow. "It wasn't a conscious decision, but I just found myself drawn to these colors," Lynda says.

When they moved in 27 years ago, Lynda admits they were a bit naïve. "We had wanted an antique, and fell in love with this place, even though it was quirky and my husband has to duck in many spots because he is so tall," she laughs. A trustee of the Wilton Historical Society for the past seven years, she adds, "We needed to live in the house, and be educated, to appreciate its pedigree. Despite its quiriness, it has always worked for us, evolving as our family life has evolved." The basement that once served as the girls' playroom now houses Lynda's letterpress business, which she calls Saltbox Press, in honor of the original structure. She uses the lofts as her painting and computer graphics studios. The attached barn, rebuilt after a fire in 2011, holds her daughter's floral design studio and what she laughingly refers to as her husband's man-cave. "When our girls were young, they complained about the house. All their friends lived in newer, more traditional homes. But now they say 'don't ever sell it'. They love that it's old and quirky." ■



