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WITH STYLE**

**Maine Mansion Restored
California Bungalow Doubled in Size
Schoolhouse Turned Cottage
Water Tower Domesticated**

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COURTLY LOVE

On the rugged coast of Maine, a personal house built by an unusual man is reborn with the help of two sympathetic decorators

The great hall demanded one large gesture, so Mallory Marshall and James Light painted a bold diamond pattern on the floor. Peacocks return to Hidden Court, this time in the form of Oriental screens. Deeply recessed casement windows are framed with Henry Calvin silk taffeta, deliberately crumpled. Needlepoint stools are just the right size for a tea tray.



BY CHRISTINE PITTEL
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They walked down the long allée of trees on a whim. But as soon as Mallory Marshall and James Light came over the rise and saw the deserted stone house, she turned to him and said, "I think I'm home." Partners in a Portland, Maine, decorating business as well as best friends, the two—diverted from an errand to pick up paint—stepped through the Tudor-style archway into a secluded courtyard and fell under the spell of Hidden Court. Neglected formal gardens led to a vast meadow rolling down to a rock-strewn beach buffeted by the Atlantic Ocean.

But this pastoral scene was imperiled. The abandoned property had been subdivided and sold; developers were bulldozing the rose arbors and planning a shopping center. Quickly, Marshall and her philanthropist husband, Peter Haffenreffer, bought back as much as they could. "We were determined to restore the house and grounds to Henry's vision," she explains. Back in the 1920s, Charles Henry Robinson began construction on this house, modeled on Ightham Mote, a 14th-century English manor he had visited on a bicycle trip in the Kentish countryside. Both homes are built around the four sides of a courtyard, but Robinson's version is far more serendipitous. "Henry was an eccentric, like me," says Marshall, who keeps chickens named after British monarchs. "He would rush out and rescue paneling from a house that was being demolished and build a room around it. He just kept going for twenty years—adding some rooms from scratch—until he completed the square."

Now the newly snug rooms are once more redolent of wood smoke, from fires lit to take the chill off Maine mornings. Marshall and Light managed to refurbish the house and still retain every square inch of patina. In the great hall—featuring a cove ceiling, wide plank floors, and secret staircase—the parched paneling was oiled and rubbed for weeks. Robinson sited the living room to catch the setting sun streaming through a carefully positioned window precisely at tea time. If you run your fingers over the 1771 paneling, you can feel the hand-planing through the paint—white, with a hint of green—matched by Light and Marshall to the bulb of a leek.

"Every object in that room calls up someone I adored," Marshall explains. "On a damp day I can sit down on one of my grandmother's chairs and smell my grandfather's pipe smoke—it makes me feel so secure." Throw pillows are covered in tattered tapestry found in Rome. When a customs official—not attuned to the ravaged beauty of her aesthetic—saw

One wing of the house (opposite above) ends in the former dovecote. Opposite below: George Smith seating anchors the living room, where a window seat looks out to the crashing waves. A bird's nest perches on a stone pedestal. This page, from top: Owners Peter Haffenreffer and Mallory Marshall. Old iron railings wall off top floor of guest quarters, where the ceiling was removed to expose the beams. Tucked behind the books is a compact guest kitchen and bath.





A stone colonnade, which connects the peacock room to the great hall, serves as a rustic open-air dining room. Far left, from top: Four different balusters are rhythmically repeated on the staircase in the entrance hall, paved with Maine slate and marble. Pumpkin velvet dining room curtains are lined with bronze-green. Mallory Marshall added the fireplace and vintage mantel in the kitchen.



the fragments, he incredulously asked, "Did you pay for those?"

Certain spaces were deftly adapted to new functions. A former dovecote became a private suite for Marshall's fifteen-year-old son. "I tried to keep the feeling of the place," she explains. "Before I touch anything I always ask myself, 'Is this what Henry would do?'" A dirt-floored garden shed piled with dusty issues of *Country Life* was transformed into self-contained guest quarters where a rusted chandelier casts a glow. More light fixtures hang in the woods until she reclaims them, weathered to just the right stage of ruin.

"The problem with contemporary architecture is the ridiculous notion that people want to be together all the time in huge family rooms," says Marshall. "I think we all need our own nooks and crannies." A room that sheltered Robinson's peacocks is now her phoneless retreat. Pinecones substitute for finials on the lamps and the window seat's pillows are covered in faded Fortuny fabric. "The Fortuny Museum in Venice was a religious experience for me," she sighs. "The guard tore off a scrap of curtain hanging on by a thread and handed it to me with a note—'Better it should go to someone who loves it than turn to dust.'"

Decades after Robinson first saw Ightham (pronounced I-tem) Mote, he learned by chance that it was about to be torn down. He bought it, spent the next thirty years restoring it, and then gave it to Britain's National Trust. Now Marshall, Light, and Haffenreffer have returned the favor by saving Hidden Court. "I think Henry brought us to his house just as he was brought to Ightham Mote," says Marshall. Like her, he was a person who knew something of value when he saw it.

Peacocks once strutted through Mallory Marshall's study (left). After carting around the old conservatory doors for years, she finally found a place where they would fit and topped them with a round window. Vintage cut-velvet panels hang behind linen curtains caught up by iron hooks. Peter Haffenreffer spotted the elegant daybed, now covered in Rogers & Goffigon wool. Above: An English watchmaker's sign hangs over a new fireplace.

Upstairs in the guest quarters, an old linen sheet suspended from a chandelier romantically drapes the iron bedstead. Visitors can curl up on the timeworn kilim-covered sofa in front of the fire. When they were children, Mallory Marshall's cousin taught her how to whistle behind that flower-strewn screen, which once stood in her grandmother's dining room. A collection of green Hungarian water bottles graces the bookshelves.

THE HOME EDITOR
BY KATHERINE THOMPSON

