

TRADITIONAL HOME

RENOVATION STYLE

FALL 1996

Revival

**LOVE
AFFAIR**

**Kitchen Revamped
with Color**

**Save Face with
Architectural Details**

**Light Up Your Life
with Sconces**

**Up from the Ruins—
Saving a Crumbling Landmark**





linens, the folding screen's leather panels, and the framed artwork, an original painting by Anita. The painting was a response to her failure to find affordable, appropriate artwork to complete the renovation. "It sounds like a daunting task since I had only taken a couple of painting and drawing courses in my life," says Anita, "but I decided to just go ahead and design some artwork myself." Incorporating the techniques, images, and colors of artists of the Arts and Crafts era, she produced paintings that are exactly right for the house, and had visitors clamoring for similar works. Before long, Anita found herself with a new career. Her India ink and gouache (a type of watercolor) artworks now are sold at museum shops and retail outlets across the country.

Along with launching a full-time business for Anita, the renovation project proved rewarding in another unexpected way. The once-neglected, now resplendent little house received a much-coveted commendation from the Historic Preservation Commission of Oak Park for "outstanding preservation . . . done with careful attention and respect for the original character of the building and Oak Park's architectural heritage."

Looking back on the renovation process, Anita has some thoughts on why it all came together so beautifully. "It really was just part of the continuing process of creating art, not art on a canvas, but art that occupies space," she says. "It was so satisfying, I'd love to do it all over again someplace else!" □

Left: Among the house's true treasures is the dining room's original built-in cabinetry. Overhead, a reproduction brass chandelier features slag-glass shades. **Above:** The redesign of the kitchen eliminated a wall-facing range and a bulky vent hood in favor of a compact island-mounted cooktop with a built-in downdraft. The wine rack supplies visual interest as well as storage.

Regional Editors: Sally Mauer and Hilary Rose

For more information, see the Buying Guide on page 118.

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“There’s not much reward in replacing a roof,” Anita sighs, recalling how eager she was to get through the sawdust-and-plaster phase and on to the fun of adding color, pattern, and texture. The interior’s original architectural details and the history and philosophy of the Arts and Crafts movement guided her design decisions. “The hallmark of the Arts and Crafts period was simplicity of line and simplicity of style,” Anita explains. “It came about in reaction to the Victorian eccentricities and the complexity of everything they did. The question I asked throughout the project was ‘What’s right for the period?’”

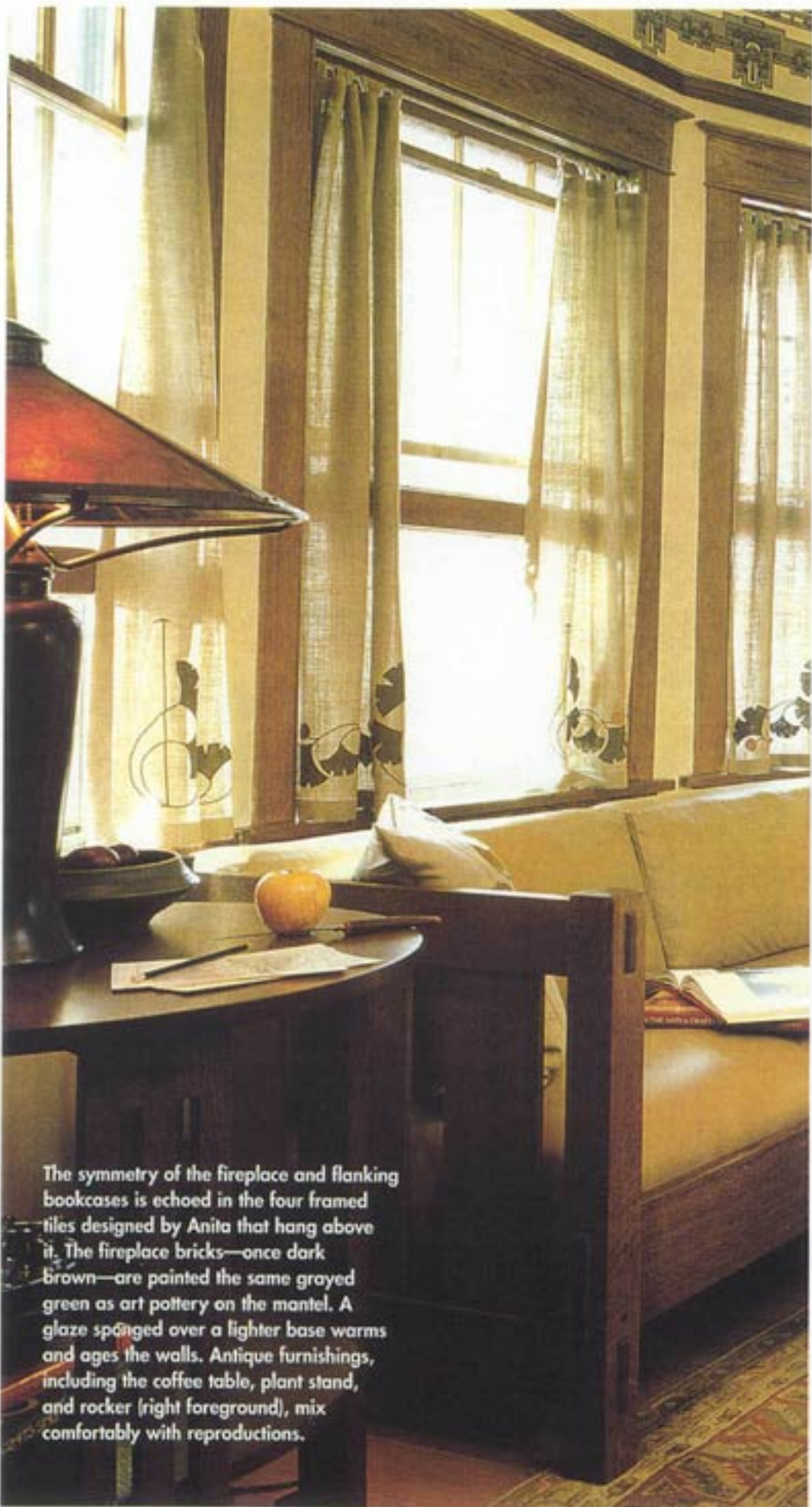
In the kitchen, the answer was walls in the signature matte green color of Arts and Crafts pottery, and oak cabinets that echoed built-ins in other parts of the house. Granite countertops honor the Arts and Crafts tradition of using natural materials, and Oriental rugs speak to the era’s reverence for handcrafting.

Much of the house is furnished with present-day copies of pieces designed nearly a century ago by Gustav Stickley. Stickley was America’s best-known proponent of the Arts and Crafts movement. His successful, straight-lined Mission furniture was a reformist’s response to the overblown curves that dominated Victorian decor, and his popular magazine, *The Craftsman*, educated the pre-World War I generation about progressive design with detailed room illustrations.

Many of the interiors Stickley showed his readers incorporated stenciled friezes or wallpaper borders—the same treatments used in Anita’s living room and dining room. “It’s a way of bringing the ceiling down visually and creating a feeling of intimacy,” says Anita.

The living room wallpaper border—a reproduction of a period design—is framed by original crown molding and an added oak strip. In the dining room, the elegant geometry of the cross-beamed ceiling suggested the stenciled border design. “I liked the linearity of the ceiling, the idea of a quadrant,” Anita recalls. “I designed the stencil to reflect that. It’s based on a favorite period textile motif, the checkerberry.”

The square motif of the stencil repeats in the handcrafted accessories: the table



The symmetry of the fireplace and flanking bookcases is echoed in the four framed tiles designed by Anita that hang above it. The fireplace bricks—once dark brown—are painted the same grayed green as art pottery on the mantel. A glaze sponged over a lighter base warms and ages the walls. Antique furnishings, including the coffee table, plant stand, and rocker (right foreground), mix comfortably with reproductions.

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