



devotion

BY JOHANNA MCBRIEN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ELLEN MCDERMOTT

For her sixteenth birthday, the wife's future husband gave her a Saratoga trunk. "He knew I liked antiques," she says. More than forty years later, antiques continue to be an integral component of this couple's life together.

When the couple was first married, the husband was a graduate student at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. They would go to the Philadelphia Antiques Show each spring, and, says the wife, "though we knew we couldn't afford objects of such quality at that point, we enjoyed viewing the booths and being inspired." When they got married, her grandmother gave them some money, and the first thing they did was visit the antiques shops in New Hope, Pennsylvania, where they purchased an English Pembroke table, currently in their dining room, and a tiger maple chest of drawers, which their daughter and son-in-law now own.

As they expanded their collection, the couple would attend the January antiques

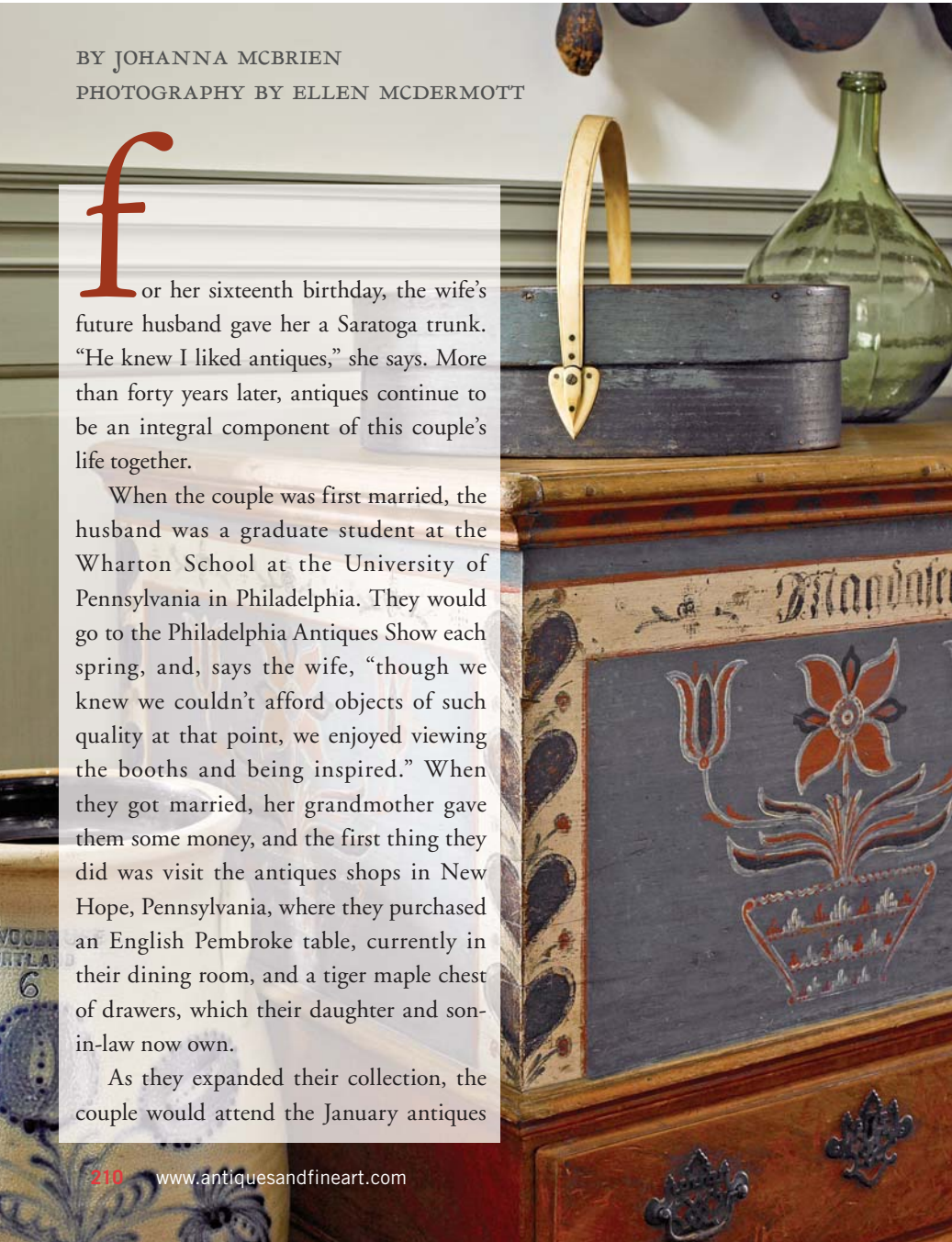
The couple wanted a house that united the architecture of New England, seen in the central section, with the architecture of the Mid-Atlantic states, evident in the stone end wall, on the left, and the partially exposed stone chimney at the end of the right extension. The brass and iron railings and front door lanterns were custom made; the French cast-iron urns date to the late nineteenth, early twentieth century.

BELOW:

The blue-painted carrier and Pennsylvania dower chest from the previous image are shown with a cobalt-decorated New York stoneware churn stamped "Maker-M. Woodruff, Cortland."

FACING PAGE:

In planning the foyer, the wife wanted a gallery aesthetic in which to display furniture, folk art, and paintings. The color scheme of blue and red—in the furniture as well as the two circa-1870-1880 Kazak rugs and custom woven flat-weave Venetian stair runner—is favored by the wife and evident throughout the house. The 1794 Pennsylvania-German dower chest retains its original paint with heart detailing. The coastal New England original blue-painted carrier continues the heart theme in its scrimshaw handle with heart hinges. The circa-1810 sign is from Birdsey Hall, Goshen, Connecticut, and was made for Birdsey Norton, who built his brick mansion between 1804 and 1810. Double-sided, the facing image is of an eagle and shield, while the reverse is painted with a rooster. Olde Hope has bought and sold the sign three times over the decades, most recently purchasing it from the Arthur Spector sale at Northeast Auctions in 2004. The Pennsylvania red-painted bowback Windsor bench is circa 1820. The Connecticut cherrywood tall-case clock dates to 1785-1795, and was purchased from Marguerite Riordan at the 1993 Winter Antiques Show in New York. The portrait of the boy and girl and their dog is signed on the reverse by Calvin Balis, New York State, and inscribed "Julia, Aged 3, and Elliott, Aged 9, 1835"; it was in the Egan collection. Both the husband and wife are drawn to folk portraiture.





BIRDSEY
HALL





ABOVE:

Holding a place of prominence at the end of the hall, the portrait of an unknown man from Union, Maine, circa 1840, by John Usher Parsons, was purchased from Joan Brownstein. Lining the floor is a rare pair of Sarouk Farahan rugs, circa 1890s. In the foreground is a Maine paint-decorated stand with faux-marble drawer front. A turned and painted tazza with collection of stone fruit is below a hand-painted theorem. The front door lock and handle are eighteenth century, in keeping with the owners' intent to integrate period material into the house.

RIGHT:

The leaping stag weathervane by J. W. Fiske of New York mimics the stag vane on the cupola of the guest barn. The barn was designed to reproduce a New Jersey stone barn with Dutch gambrel roof.

shows in New York—the Winter Antiques Show, the Piers, and Sanford Smith's show to benefit the Museum of American Folk Art (now the American Folk Art Museum)—settling on one major purchase; increasing their collection slowly, but with items of quality. It was at a Sanford Smith show in the early 1980s that they first met Patrick Bell and Edwin Hild of Olde Hope Antiques. An instant bond was formed that continues today.

The wife had been intrigued by painted surfaces at the Fall Antiques Show at the Piers a few years earlier, and since this was, and remains, Olde Hope's specialty, it was a natural association. Their first purchase from the firm, however, was a large fish weathervane, now prominently displayed in the couple's kitchen. It was the first of many vanes acquired through the years, most of which have come from Olde Hope. "Weathervanes appeal to us because of their simple design and utilitarian function," says the wife. "We also enjoy collecting vanes because their forms reflect our interests in fishing, animals, boats, and country life."

Weathervanes are so interwoven into the couple's collection that they named



their current home, built eight years ago, “Weathervane Farm.” Built on land they purchased in 1997, their goal was a country home they could furnish with their antiques, and where they could entertain, yet feel comfortable in. Having grown up spending time on Cape Cod, the wife wanted a house that united the architecture of New England with the stonework of the Mid-Atlantic states, and that would fit in with its environment.

The couple also wanted their house to combine a period aesthetic with contemporary, open living spaces and large windows to bring the outside in. They recognized, however, that proportion of scale was important if their antiques were to fit aesthetically. Fortunately, they located an architect who lives in a period eighteenth-century house and understood what they were looking for.

The wife had been unconsciously preparing for this house for years. In college, she had made a hobby of looking through magazines and pulling out photographs of interiors. So when it came time to build the house, she had a large loose-leaf notebook of rooms she liked and those she didn't like. She also realized there was



ABOVE: One of two similar ladder-back side chairs with original surface lining the hallway. With its applied skirts, dramatic bulbous turned stretcher, and suppressed ball feet, this chair exhibits a classic Delaware Valley form. Above the chair is one of several profile portraits in the collection, with their classic grey background, dating between the 1810s to 1840s, and attributed to “Mr. Boyd,” of central Pennsylvania. Though his identity is not confirmed, it is possible Mr. Boyd was a portrait and furniture painter working in the Harrisburg area.



LEFT: The Pennsylvania Chippendale cherrywood hanging wall cabinet, circa 1790, was purchased at Sotheby's in 2002 from the Gunston Hall Plantation collection. Within and on top of the cabinet is part of the couple's collection of mocha ware. One of a pair of portraits by “Mr. Boyd” flank the cabinet.





ABOVE:

The color of the telescope in this striking Maine Prior-Hamblin School painting of an unknown sea captain, in its original frame, complements the colors of the living room.

LEFT:

The elegant living room contains period detailing such as beams and paneled walls, and combines contemporary furniture with period antiques and folk art. The colors of the room come together in the circa-1890s Serapi carpet, the couple's first major purchase over thirty years ago. Silhouetted against the expansive windows is a mid-nineteenth-century Cushing leaping deer weathervane, placed on a Pennsylvania tea table. To the right is an eighteenth-century Queen Anne looking glass. Two Philadelphia birdcage candle stands flank the fireplace, each with hogscraper candlesticks with brass wedding bands. The ship weathervane above the mantel dates to the nineteenth century. Both period easy chairs are from Massachusetts. The oval-top stretcher-base New England tavern table retains its early painted surface, and is surmounted by a carved nineteenth-century trencher with original blue paint. The child's drop-front desk in figured maple with original finish is a recent purchase from the Fine collection sold in 2010 at Northeast Auctions in New Hampshire.

another interior "look" she fancied: "I wanted my home to be decorated like Olde Hope's booths," she says.

Consulting with Patrick Bell of Olde Hope, the wife would review plans of the house with him and discuss where the couple's furniture would look best. As the interior decorative details were being planned, Patrick introduced the couple to David Guilmet, with whom Patrick had formed Bell-Guilmet Associates in 1990, a firm that specializes in interior design for collectors of art and antiques. It was a perfect match,





ABOVE:

The owners wanted a Queen Anne high chest, and Olde Hope located this one in a private collection. Made of figured maple, it is from Rhode Island, circa 1740-1760, and is of an unusually small size with pleasingly narrow proportions. Flanking the high chest is a pair of circa-1800 Philadelphia bow-back Windsor chairs with original white paint, mahogany arms, leather seats, and branded "Cox" (from Northeast Auction's Arthur Spector, 2004). Above the chairs is a fine pair of profile portraits in original frames of Mr. and Mrs. George Buckingham, Pennsylvania, circa 1830, attributed to Mr. Boyd. Surmounting the high chest are Native American Woodlands tribes baskets with original "swabbed" decoration.

PREVIOUS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM UPPER LEFT:

The figured maple Chippendale slant-front desk was one of the couple's early purchases. The German églomisé painted scene is a rendering of Autumn, circa 1830. A Spanish-foot Queen Anne maple side chair is pulled up to the desk. The couple purchased the painting of the whaling scene from Fred Giampietro at the Winter Antiques Show in 1988. This picture reminds the couple of Nantucket, where they have a home, and ties in with the island's history of whaling. The miniature ship weathervane, from Olde Hope, was possibly used on an out building such as a shed. Continuing the nautical theme are three scrimshaw pie crimpers, purchased from Hyland Granby Antiques.

The young girl, by Sturtevant Hamblin, circa 1840s, is identified as Sarah North of Portland, Maine. The glass tulips set into a cobalt decorated stoneware crock are one of several bouquets in the house. The New England square-top candlestand, with sawtooth applied edge, was found in Herkimer, New York, and dates to circa 1820. It was purchased from Sam Herrup.

The Hudson River steam boat *Oliver M. Pettit*, 1857, by James Bard (1815-1897), "exemplifies the perfect color palette," says Patrick Bell. Exhibited in the *The Flowering of American Folk Art*, the 1974 Whitney Museum exhibition, the painting was also illustrated in its accompanying catalogue. The painting is inscribed and dated on the lower right.



Set in silhouette against the paneled mantel is an extraordinary mid-nineteenth-century New England banner weather-vane made of copper with yellow sizing and gilding, from Olde Hope Antiques. The swan decoy on the table was carved in the 1950s by Madison Mitchell (1901-1993), Havre de Grace, Maryland. The Benjamin Lincoln banquet table, 1790, probably Massachusetts, was originally owned by General Lincoln of Boston, the officer designated by General Washington to receive the British sword of surrender at the Battle of Yorktown in 1791. Six of the mahogany Chippendale chairs are from Nathan Liverant and Son, and originally came from the Brown residence in Adams, Massachusetts, circa 1800. The other six in the set were custom made to match by Robert Whitley Studios, Solebury, Pennsylvania. The Heriz carpet is early 1900s. The Pennsylvania chip-carved fireplace surround was reclaimed from a period interior; the pilasters were made for the space and marbled by David Guilmet of Bell-Guilmet Associates. The chandelier is a reproduction from a pair Olde Hope purchased at the Egan sale (Northeast Auctions, 2006). Not shown in this room is a primitive fruit still life, artist unknown, and a Southern Hepplewhite sideboard, probably from Athens, Georgia, and purchased from Deanne Levison.

and together with the architect, they forged ahead. David not only ensured that the scale and decorative elements worked within the interior and with the collection, but also that the exterior elements completed the unified whole of the aesthetic the couple was seeking.

With one child in college and another in the workforce, the wife was able to

devote herself to the project. Following the couple's wish for a period look, David used plaster surfaces, reclaimed beams, paneling, and a period-appropriate entrance hall and stairway. Attention to detail was so important that the lower stairs had to be reworked a number of times before correctly situated. To attain the most appropriate crown moldings, various mock-ups were

made and fitted until the most suitable was selected for each space.

Since 2003, when the couple moved into the house, they have made readjustments with each new acquisition. Although their initial purchase was English furniture, the focus of their collecting has been Americana. "I like the aesthetics and the history," says the wife. "For instance, the table in the



ABOVE:

When home, the couple spends most of their time relaxing, cooking, and enjoying family in the kitchen. Patrick Bell and David Guilmet of Bell-Guilmet worked with the owners to personalize the space. Because of its open plan, they warmed the space by using reclaimed hand-hewn beams to bring the eye down from the high ceilings. Part of the wife's collection of antique candle lanterns and oak and ash splint baskets also provide visual depth. The cod weathervane on the left was one of the couple's early purchases from Olde Hope Antiques; they purchased the other fish weathervanes from the firm as well. On the center island is a large treenware bowl and wooden cutting boards. Visible along the right wall is some of their game board collection, acquired for their checkerboard patterns and simple graphics and colors. The early nineteenth-century stretcher-base schoolmaster's desk retains its original grey paint. Visible in the dining room beyond is a Hudson Valley naïve landscape. In front of the window on the left is a large oval maple hutch table from New York state; its original red wash remains on the base. The Windsor chairs and stools are reproductions. The early nineteenth-century chandelier is from the Lamot du Pont Copeland collection.

RIGHT:

The New Jersey step-back cupboard with dramatic scalloping retains its original tan paint. "I think the wear pattern is as interesting as the paint," says Patrick Bell. "It becomes a design element." Woodlands baskets provide color on top of the cupboard, as does the graduated stack of firkins with original blue paint. Displayed on the cupboard is a portion of the wife's extensive collection of blue-decorated spongeware. The nineteenth-century New England sawbuck table retains its original red paint and scrubbed top.



dining room was owned by Captain Benjamin Lincoln, who George Washington selected to receive Cornwallis' sword at Yorktown." Folk art also plays an integral role, with the wife noting, "it works well with painted furniture, which has long been an interest of mine."

The color selected for each room was based on its furnishings, which David worked on establishing in tandem with the wife. "We don't want a house to look as if a decorator just left," says Patrick, explaining his and David's approach. "Each house with which we are involved is personalized to the collectors and their collections." To this end, textiles are used only as backdrops or accents; the focus is on the antiques and art. Most of the rugs are custom designed and woven unless they are Orientals, and the walls are in neutral shades with glazing to add depth of color.




THIS PAGE, TOP:

The mid-nineteenth-century weathervane with farmer, horse, and plow, is one of a kind. It was found in Cooper, Pennsylvania. Complementing the form are iron strap hinges on the door. The two-tiered red-painted hanging wall box is New England, 1820s-1830s, and the rooster weathervane dates to the early twentieth century. The circa-1800 Riley Whiting tall clock, Winchester, Connecticut, was purchased from Deanne Levison and retains its red stain with figured wood inlay. A blue-painted box from New England is placed under the sawbuck table with original red paint. To the left is a circa-1840 bench table with original brown paint and scrubbed top, with spongeware bowls beneath and demijohn bottles above.

THIS PAGE, BOTTOM:

The exceptionally large nineteenth-century floral rug mounted on the side wall of the family room was purchased from Collette Donovan.

More good advice that Patrick and David give to their clients is that a house cannot be about how you picture yourself living, but about how you *really* live. The wife embraced this notion throughout the house. The kitchen, for example, is where the couple spends most of their time, and this came into play when deciding how to plan the room. Though an open, contemporary space with expansive windows, it also has the feel of a period room with its hand-hewn ceiling beams, board-and-batten fireplace wall, and plaster finish. Unifying the space are the couple's antiques, combined alongside upholstered furniture.

The couple feels that the art and antiques they have acquired over the years provide a sense of focus to their home as well as offer tremendous pleasure—in their initial purchase and enjoyment thereafter. And now their love of antiques has been taken up by their children. "When our daughter married," says the wife happily, "the first thing we did was bring her and her husband to the Philadelphia Antiques Show." 



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1. Early shirred rug, New England, circa 1830-1840.

2. Basket with flowers, probably New England, dated 1863.

3. Fish pattern rug, late nineteenth-century, perhaps by Frost.

4. Hen and chicks hooked rug, Pennsylvania, early twentieth century.

5. This cat hooked rug was an early purchase. Pennsylvania, nineteenth century.

6. This pair of horses was an early purchase. Probably Pennsylvania, nineteenth century.

7. Two horses with hearts, Pennsylvania, late nineteenth century.

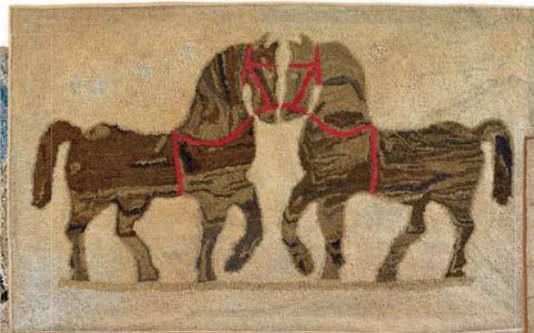
8. Flower basket, New England, late nineteenth-century.



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