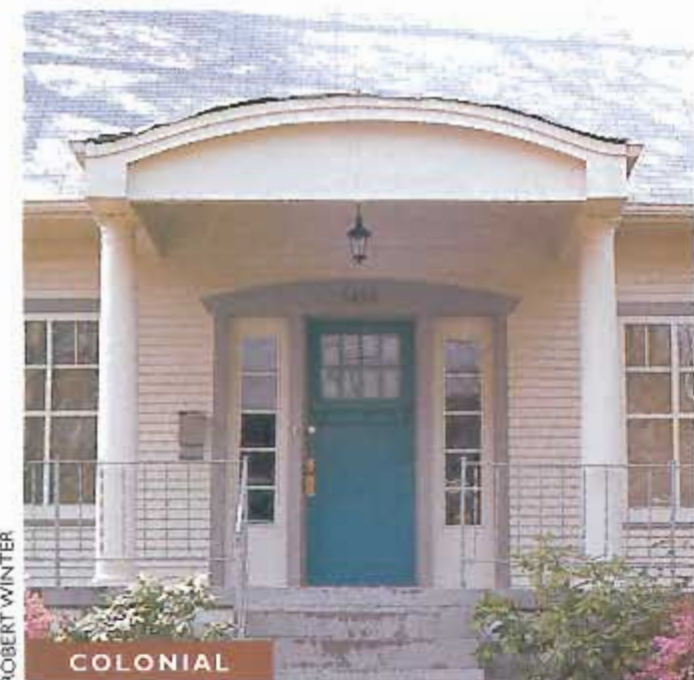
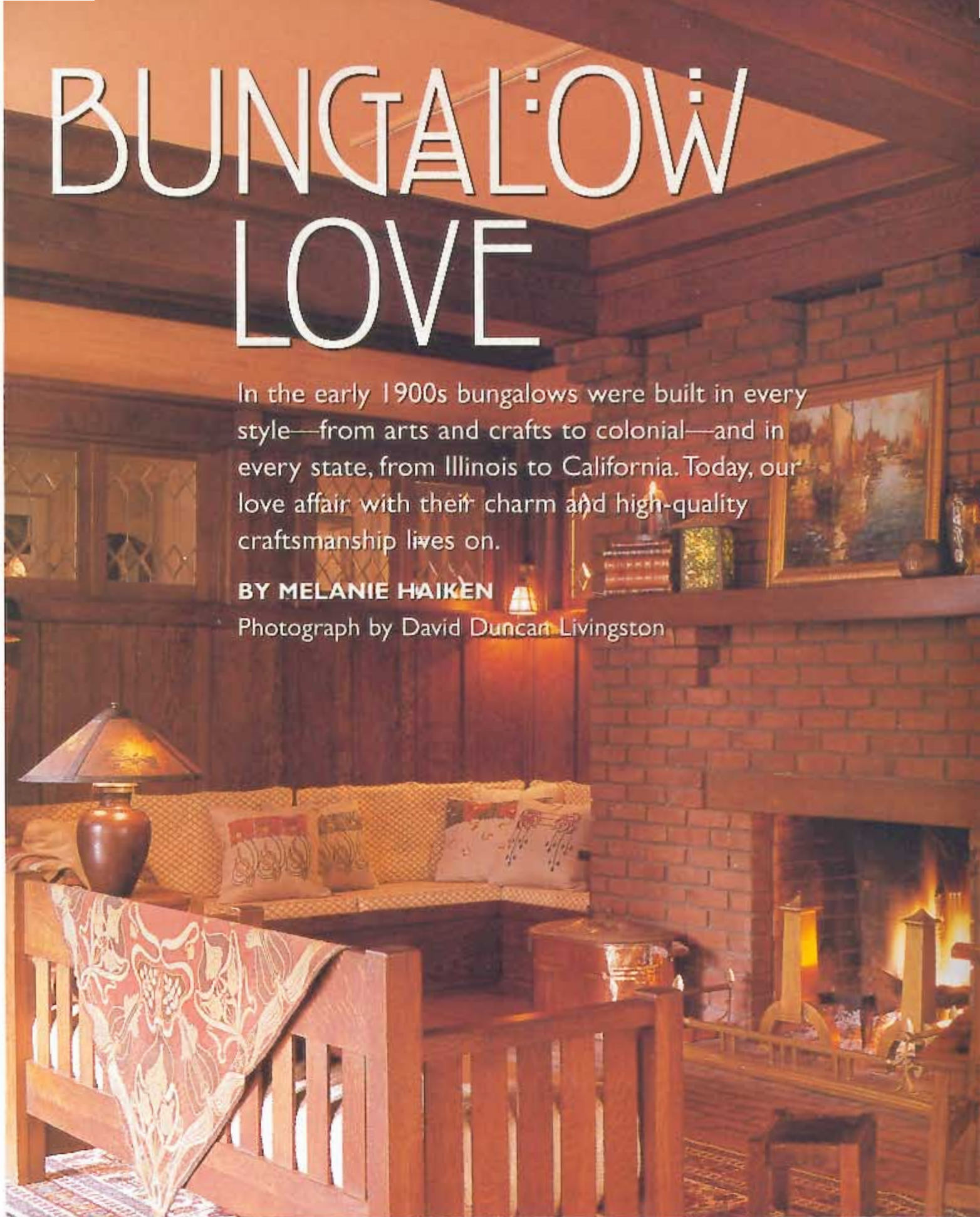


BUNGALOW LOVE

In the early 1900s bungalows were built in every style—from arts and crafts to colonial—and in every state, from Illinois to California. Today, our love affair with their charm and high-quality craftsmanship lives on.

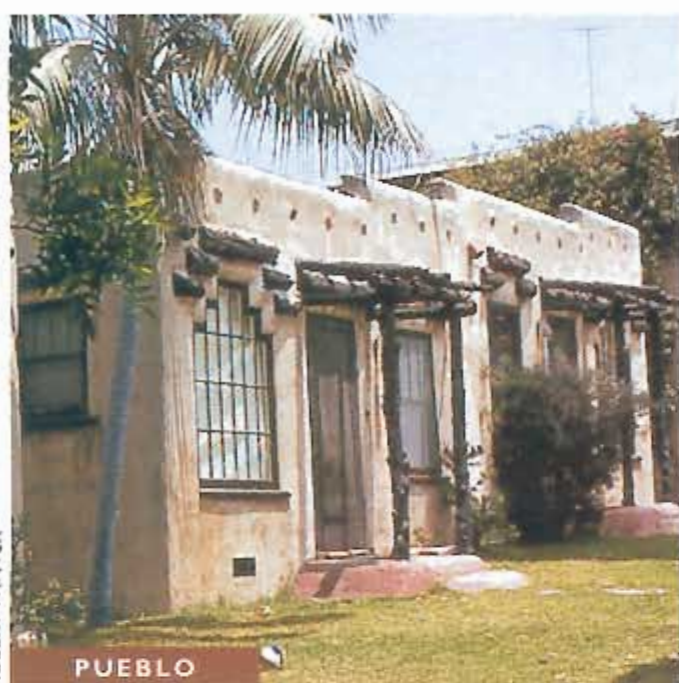
BY MELANIE HAIKEN

Photograph by David Duncan Livingston



ROBERT WINTER

COLONIAL



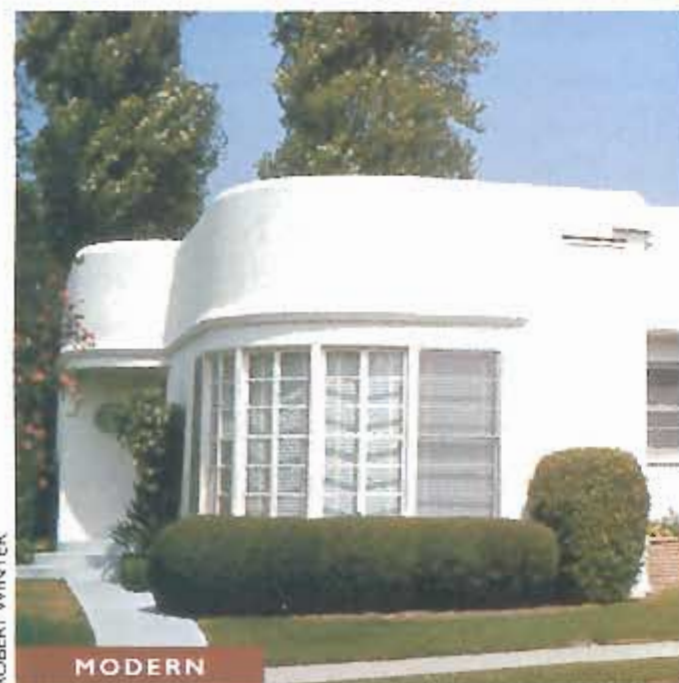
ROBERT WINTER

PUEBLO



ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF

CALIFORNIA



ROBERT WINTER

MODERN

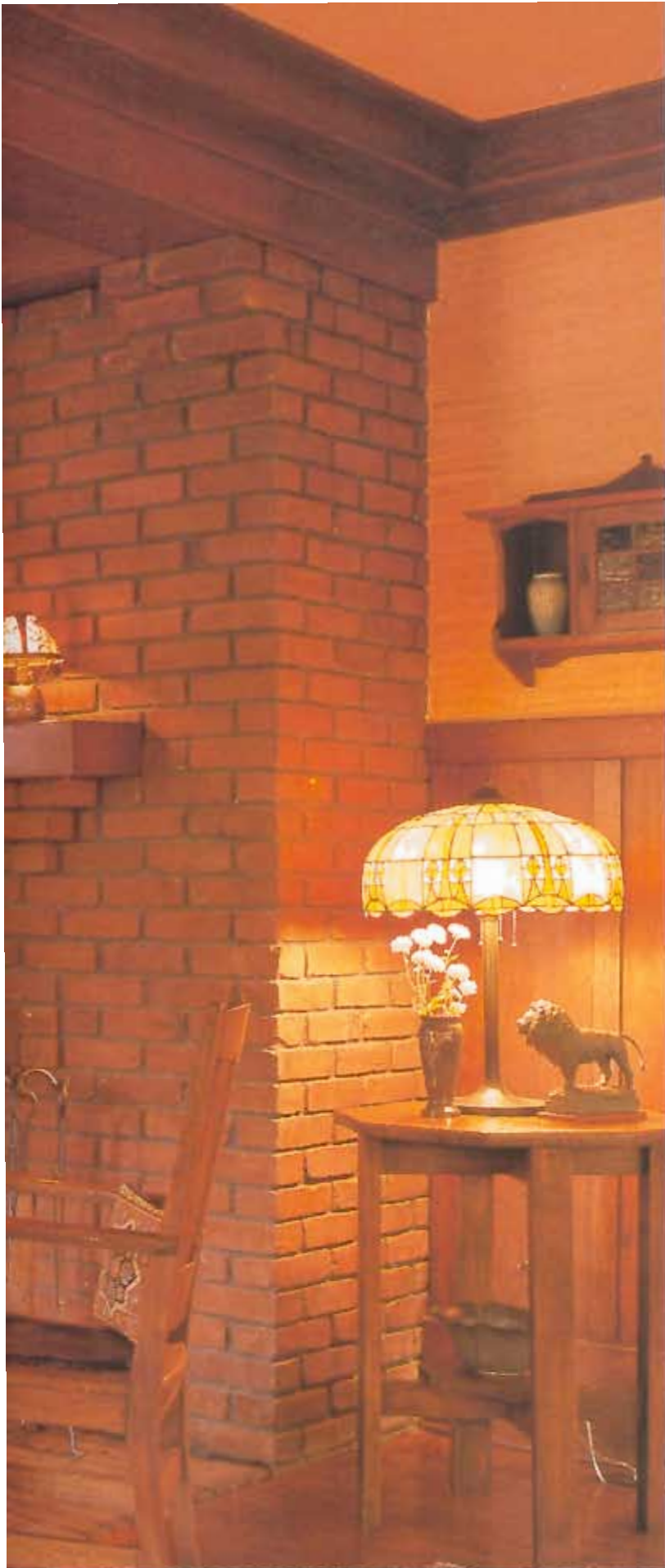
When my daughters were babies, I never needed a baby monitor: I could hear every cough and gurgle from their room just across the hall. That's because our house is small—in fact, at 1,000 square feet, it's about as small as a two-bedroom, one-bath house could conceivably be. But it's also because our house is a bungalow, and bungalows are all about intimacy—the kind of intimacy that grows out of hearing one another breathe.

"Simplify your life," that oft-heard slogan of the late 1990s, could just as easily have been the credo of the bungalow craze that swept America from 1890 to 1930. The emphasis on craftsmanship, family life and outdoors-oriented good health seems surprisingly in tune with what many families find themselves earnestly in search of today. I know, because from the moment I stepped into the redwood-paneled living room of my

circa-1925 bungalow in San Rafael, California, I knew I had found a home, in the full meaning of that word.

Defined in many different ways but most comprehensively as a one- or one-and-a-half-story house in which the living areas and sleeping areas are all on the same floor, a bungalow is quintessentially cozy, building intimacy out of proximity. Always an economical form of housing, bungalows were designed to emphasize common spaces over private spaces, with deep front porches and gracious living and dining rooms, making whatever sacrifices were necessary where they were least likely to be noticed.

"Many bungalow designers were incredibly creative in their use of space," says San Francisco designer Paul Duchscherer, author of *The Bungalow* and *Inside the Bungalow*. "They wanted the house to feel as big as possible, so they would give



America's Homestyles: The Bungalow airs Sun, June 6, 9 p.m. and midnight; Wed., June 9, 10 p.m. and 1 a.m.; Sat., June 12, 5 p.m.

people plenty of room to entertain friends and be with family, then limp by with a bare minimum for private space."

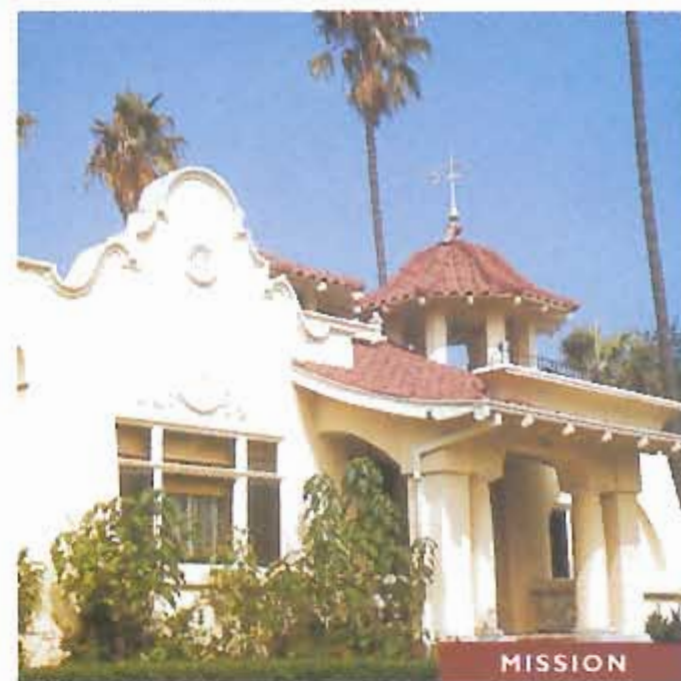
The word "bungalow" originated from the Hindu word *bangala*, which described a narrow house with a low, overhanging roof and a long veranda along the front. Discovering that these low-lying structures were naturally cool and airy in the summer and easy to heat in the winter, the British borrowed both the word and the concept and soon began building bungalows everywhere they went. In America the first documented use of the term was a summer house on Cape Cod built in 1879. Bungalows immediately became linked with vacation architecture, and it was an easy jump from there to the

suburbs as hordes of families migrated out of the cities in search of their own tiny piece of rural heaven.

Bungalows sprang up all over the country, with high concentrations in California and the Midwest, wherever people were settling in large numbers. The basic concept was modified to fit the prevailing styles of the region: In Southern California, stucco mission-style bungalows were hugely popular, and in Chicago and other midwestern cities, bungalows were often made of brick or stone. A bungalow was the perfect first home for a young couple, who could buy an empty lot on easy terms, then purchase a set of house plans for \$5 to \$25 from Sears, Roebuck and Company or any number of smaller competitors. Soon enough, you could buy the whole house, precut and marked for easy assembly, for as little as \$700-\$900. By the mid-1930s, Sears alone had sold more than 100,000 kit homes.

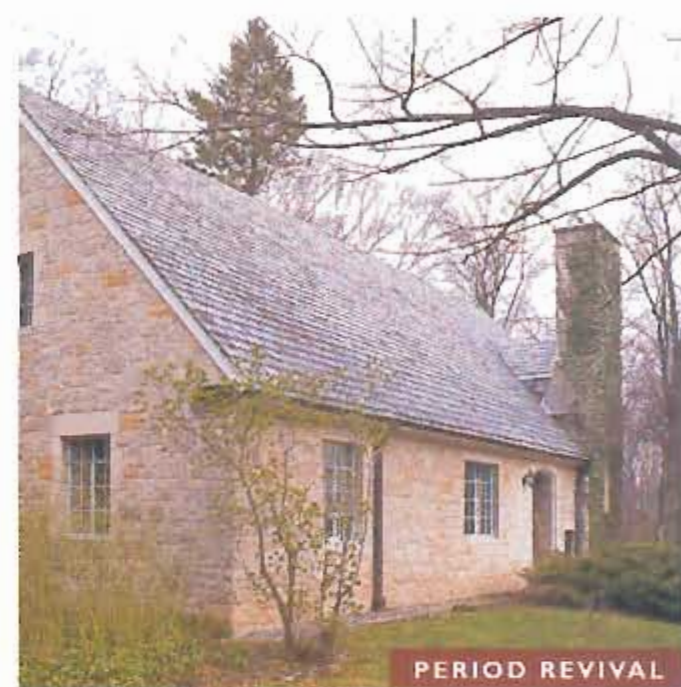
But the fact that they could be built quickly did not mean bungalows were fly-by-night in quality. On the contrary, the bungalow fad was closely related to the Arts and Crafts movement, which had started in Britain a few decades before, and bungalow designers espoused the same values of sturdy construction and hand-detailed craftsmanship. Partly as a result of their compactness, most bungalows featured extensive built-ins, such as bookshelf-lined room dividers and beveled-glass dining-room cabinets. The emphasis was always on natural wood: paneling was common, as were hardwood floors and beamed ceilings. "Bungalows were incredibly practical. All the built-ins meant you needed less furniture, and the paneling and simple finishes meant you weren't redecorating all the time," says Paul Duchscherer.

Bungalows remain popular today because of their quality, says Randell Makinson, director emeritus of the Gamble House in Pasadena, a famous bungalow-style house/museum. "The style relates to something that is real, that is done well in a careful, thoughtful manner." This style can't be applied at the end, Makinson warns: "Bungalow design takes its cues from the site, from the climate, from the materials at hand and from the type of craftsmen working in your region. It's not just deciding to use shingles and throwing them up any which way."



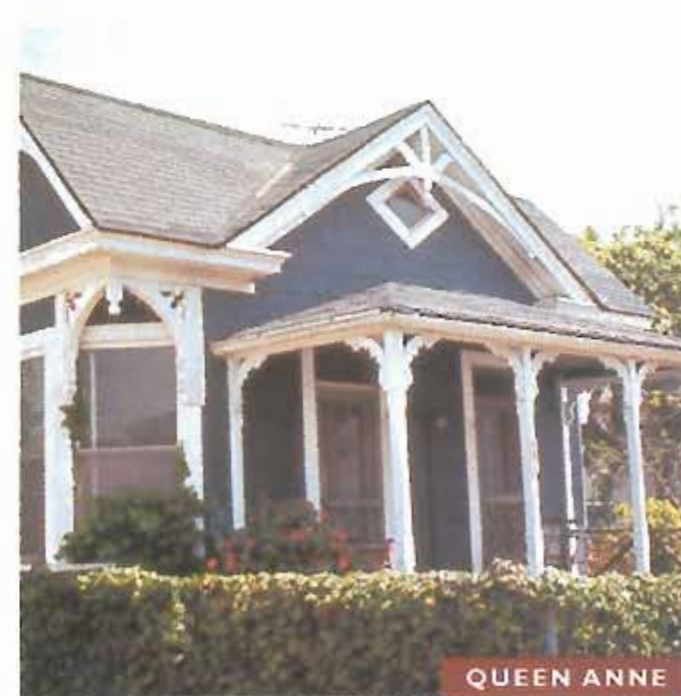
MISSION

ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF



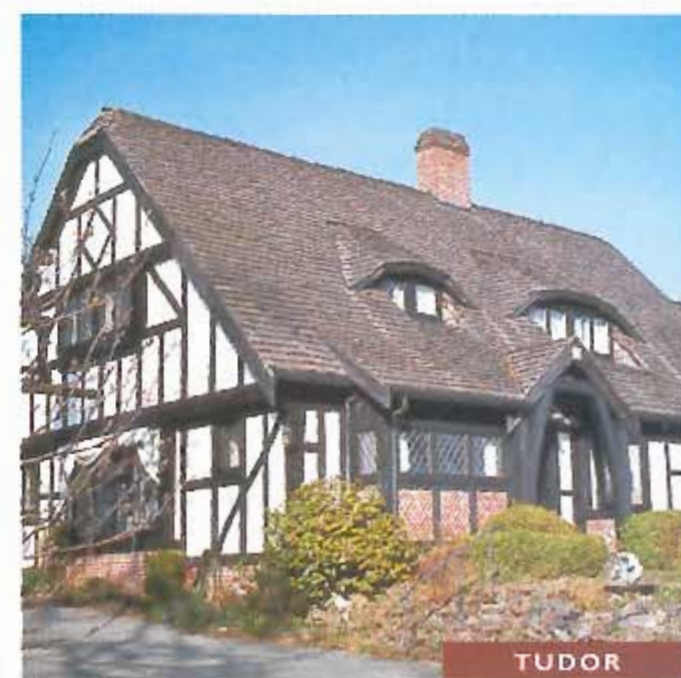
PERIOD REVIVAL

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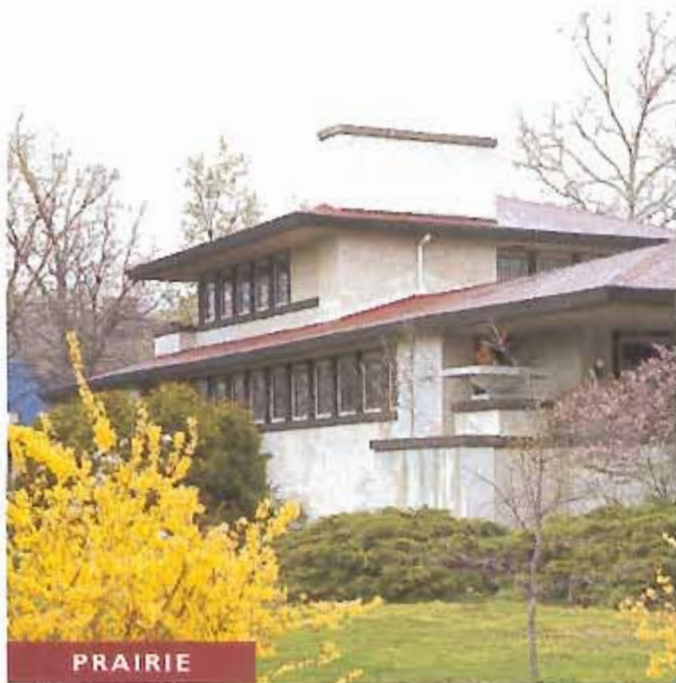


TUDOR

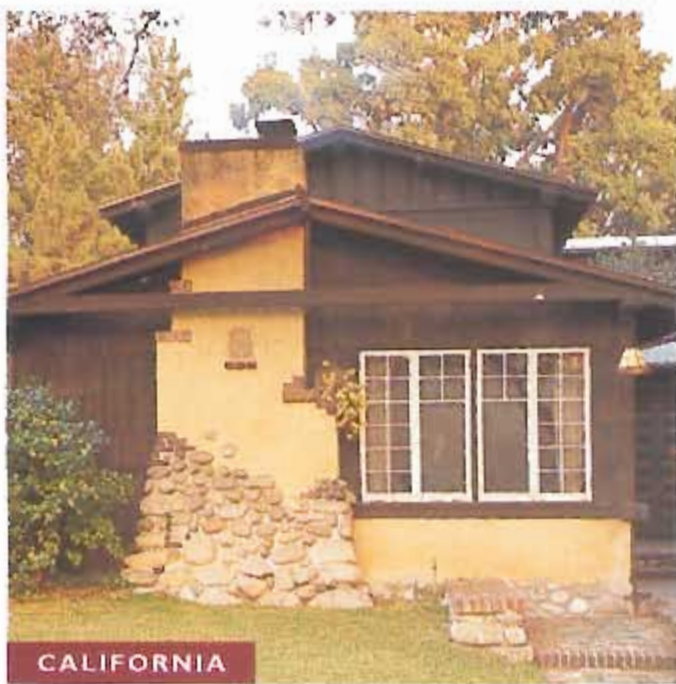
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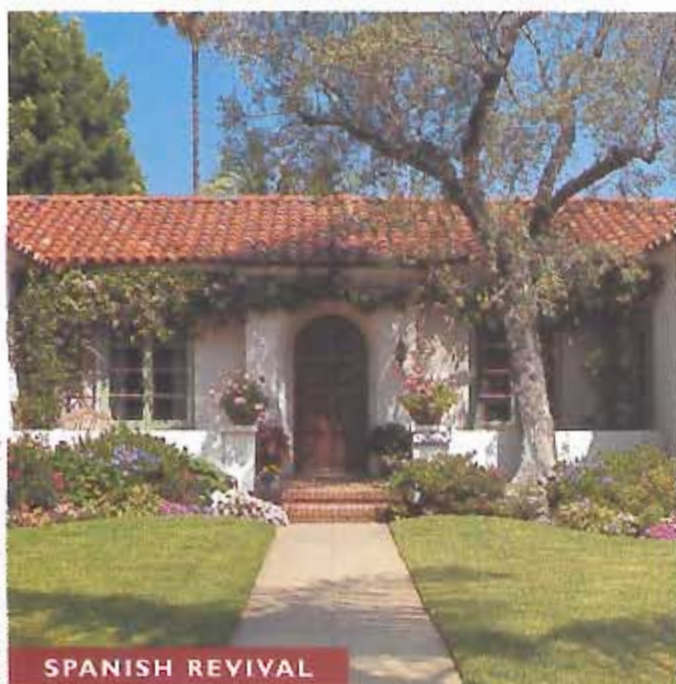
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PRAIRIE



CALIFORNIA



SPANISH REVIVAL

ALEXANDER VERTIKOFF (4)

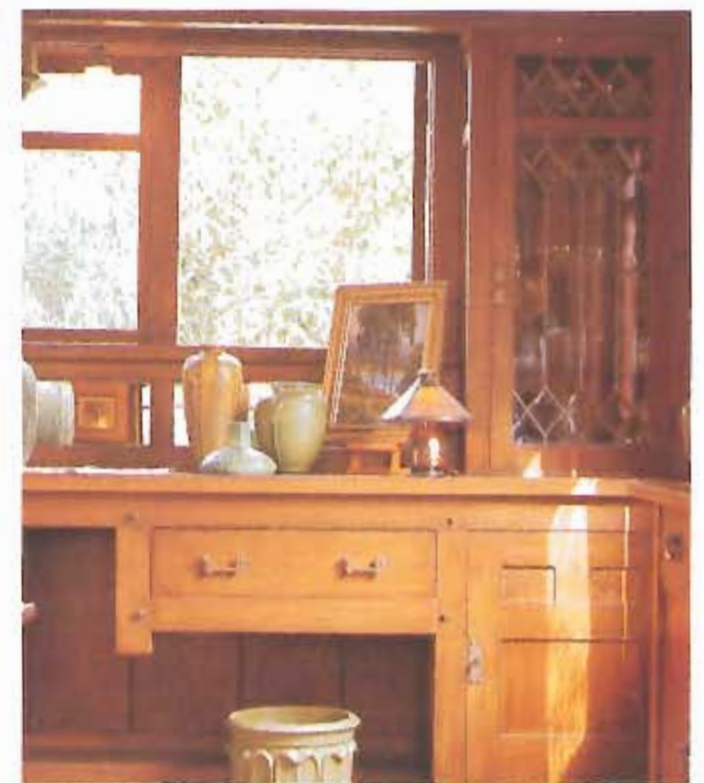


DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON (2)

Bungalow trademarks: one or one-and-a-half levels, low-hanging roof, veranda, careful construction, intimate spaces and glorious built-ins.

Nowadays, living in a bungalow means living a little differently from the current norm—no extra TV room or family room for us, and certainly no master bedroom suite with its own bath and walk-in closets. No office, either: I write in a small corner of our bedroom. But once again, proximity can have advantages: when I'm agonizing over a sentence late at night, I can read it out loud to my husband lying in bed just a few feet away. My daughters share not only a bedroom, but a closet and one five-drawer dresser. Luckily, there's the basement, and the seasonal ritual of boxing: Every April we pack away the woolen sweaters and fleece leggings and get out the shorts and tank tops. A hassle, yes, but it also gives a reassuring rhythm to the year. And it saves me from having to talk my stubborn 3-year-old out of wearing her favorite sundress in January.

When I feel cramped for space (usually after visiting friends whose houses seem airy and bright and free of the stuff that seems to cram every corner of mine), I think of the family who owned our house before us. They must have loved it as much as we do, since they lived here for an astonishing 43 years, from 1949 to 1992, and raised four children here. While



Arts-and-Crafts bungalows are among the most popular—much-loved for their beautiful woodwork and leaded-glass windows.

we're not at all sure how they did it—we honestly think the parents may have slept in a trailer in the driveway for a few years—we find their example inordinately comforting. It just goes to show you that when it comes to bungalows, it's all a matter of scale. ●

MELANIE HAIKEN is the Managing Editor of San Francisco Magazine.