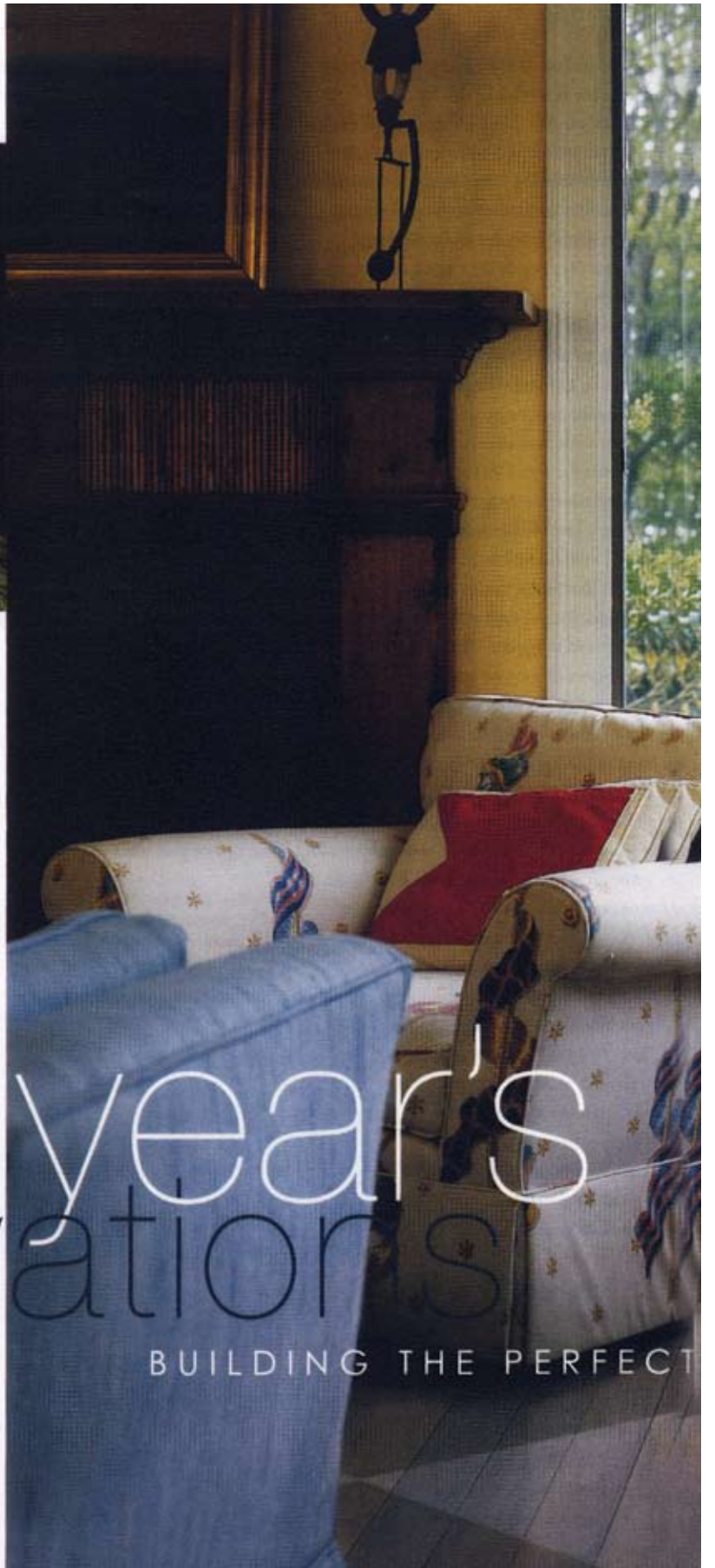


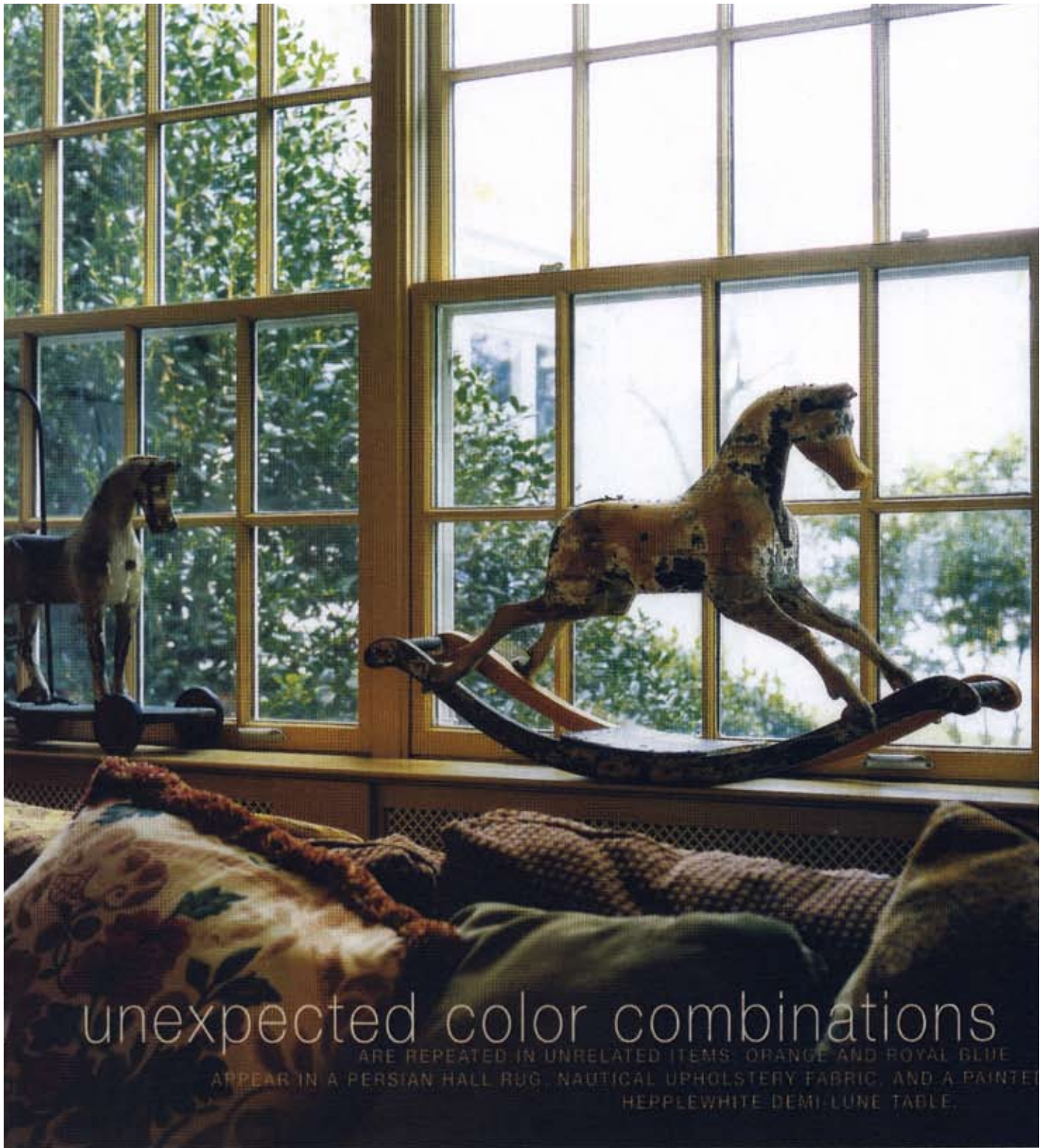


Jean and Mike McHale (bottom right) have taken on home renovation projects one at a time. The River Room retains the breezy feeling of a porch, with the floor faux-painted in a diamond pattern. The entry of the house, once facing the river, was moved to the graceful pillared front door, reached by a cedar-lined drive (top).



new year's renovations

BUILDING THE PERFECT



unexpected color combinations

ARE REPEATED IN UNRELATED ITEMS: ORANGE AND ROYAL BLUE
APPEAR IN A PERSIAN HALL RUG, NAUTICAL UPHOLSTERY FABRIC, AND A PAINTED
HEPPLEWHITE DEMI-LUNE TABLE.

plasma television, or relaxing in front of the fire. The floors are still cement, but it's impossible to tell: Jean had them faux painted to look like massive limestone tiles.

Four years ago, the McHales decided to do something about the dining room. Down came the prosaic pastel floral wallpaper that they inherited when they bought the house nine years ago, and up went mural-scaled scenes of Boston Harbor, West Point, New York Harbor, and Niagara Falls.

A large Regency-style mahogany sideboard was placed along one wall. An Irish corner cupboard that had languished at the store fits comfortably in the corner that separates West Point and New York Harbor. The cabinet, which Jean brought home many years ago, didn't appeal to buyers in the store, although, she says, "I could have sold it a dozen times from here."

It's easy to see why: While the store attempts to display its furniture, lamps, and rugs in context—with vignettes representing sitting rooms, bedrooms, dining rooms, and foyers arranged throughout the 30,000 square feet of what was once a lumber company in Federal Hill—the setting in this Trappe home is the real thing. Antiques live with the modest pieces, and everything, regardless of era or cost, reflects the eclectic and often whimsical tastes of the owners.

Unexpected color combinations are repeated in unrelated items: Orange and royal blue appear in a Persian hall rug, nautical upholstery fabric, and a painted Hepplewhite demi-lune table. A series of Mary Cassatt prints is displayed along the entry hall, and Jean's collectibles—from miniature samples of fine furniture to French Santons figurines—occupy nearly every surface.

McHale's home is a simple four-square Victorian Italianate design with a two-story wing that was added in the early 20th century. Ingleside Farm, as it was called, is one of four houses built by William Hughlett, a ship-builder, and his three sons.

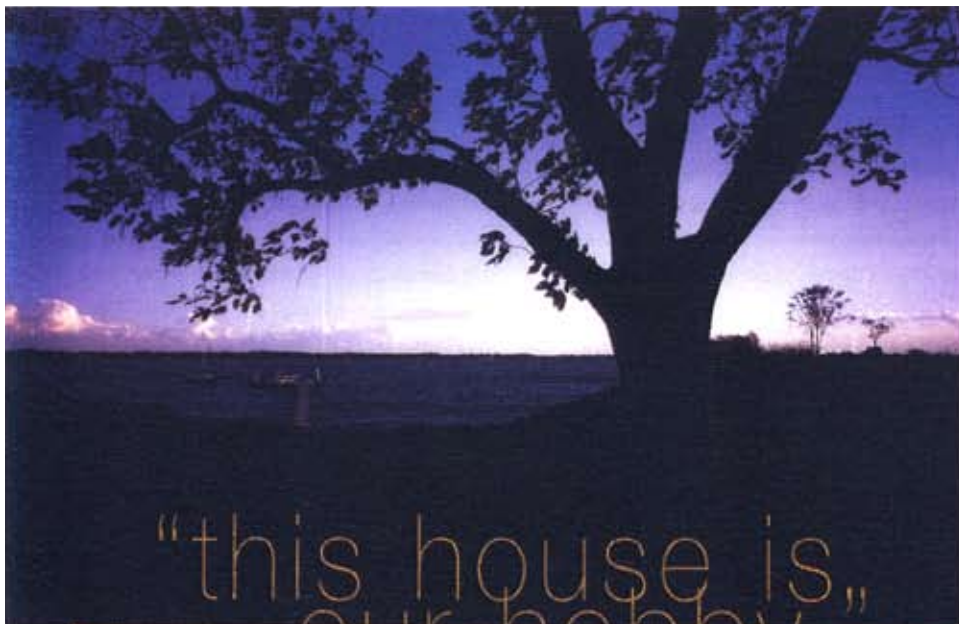
The houses are built along the river. In the 1800s, logic dictated that the main entrance face the water, where commerce and transportation were more efficiently conducted. At some point, the front door of Ingleside was moved to the other side of the house, where it now faces a formal drive, bordered by stately cedar trees planted in the 1940s.

In the meantime, what was once the front porch became the "river room," a term that Jean hadn't encountered until she moved to the Eastern Shore.

"Around here, instead of a sun porch, the casual room in the house is referred to as the river room," she explains. The McHales' river room, which received attention three years ago, is an informal

Jean's collections, like these antique painted hobby horses (left), grace surfaces throughout the house. Above, the formal dining table (not an antique) can be expanded to seat 14. The Venetian chandelier, converted from gas to electric, came from an old house in Baltimore. The McHale family shares most of their meals at the antique French farm table in the River Room (below). Jean bought the eight chairs for \$40 at a shop in England and painted them herself.





"this house is,
our hobby"

SAYS JEAN. "WE DON'T PLAY TENNIS, WE DON'T GOLF... MUCH. AND WE DON'T REALLY DO AS MUCH ENTERTAINING AS I WOULD LIKE."

place, its floor painted in a faux wood pattern to give it the feel of a porch. Family meals are served here at the 1880 French chestnut farm table.

Last year's basement overhaul, as well as some new landscaping, was completed in time for the couple's youngest son Scott's wedding, held in the backyard (under a canopy while Hurricane Ivan raged to the south). The bride and groom extended their post-wedding trip by hanging out in

The McHale's 15-acre property extends to the Choptank River. The basement (below) was recently renovated into a warm, yet gracious apartment.



Trappe, comfortable in the brand-new basement apartment, which is decorated with copper bowls and an oxidized weathervane that Scott's wife, Shanna, salvaged from the Pennsylvania horse farm her own family once owned.

The newlyweds' extended residency is a clue to why the McHales continue to hammer away at this house: "We want our kids to keep coming back," says Jean. The three McHale boys, Tom, Greg, and Scott, have lived away from home for years, but their bedrooms along a low-ceilinged hallway above the kitchen remain more or less intact.

The house, while an expression of the McHales' commitment to their offspring (and their offspring's offspring), is also a shared passion for Mike and Jean. "This house is our hobby," says Jean. "We don't play tennis, we don't golf...much. And we don't really do as much entertaining as I would like."

She reconsiders that last statement. "Actually, we entertain our kids and their friends more than our own friends." She points to a berm that has been fashioned on the side of the lawn around a bonfire pit. "Last New Year's Eve we had 40 people—friends of all the children—sitting around the bonfire."

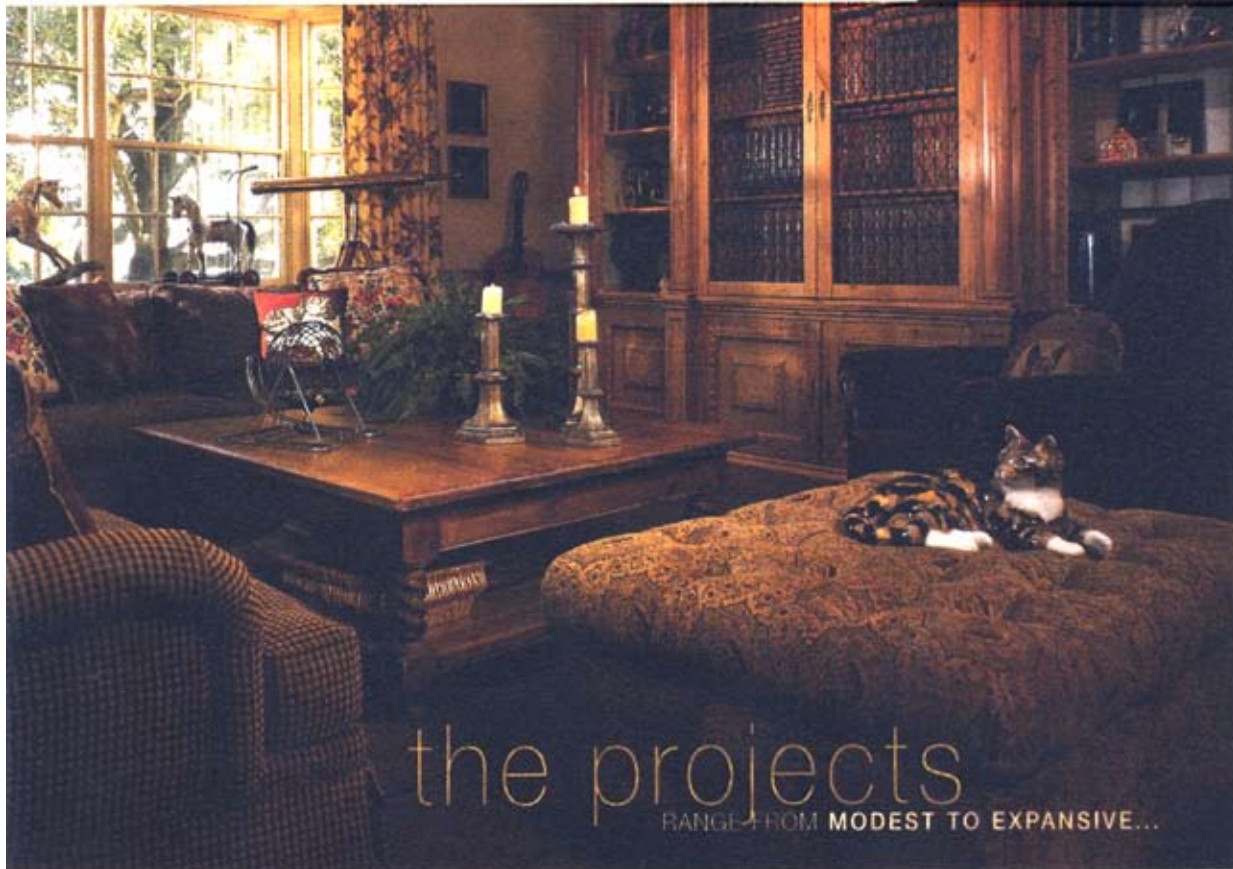
And what will this New Year bring? Which corner of the house will be targeted for overhaul?

Jean can't say for sure. The only thing that remains untouched in the house is the kitchen, but that presents a gargantuan undertaking. She envisions knocking out the butler's pantry to build a staircase to the basement, renovating the one unfinished room down there, and

expanding the kitchen by building an addition into the backyard, a construction project that will also expand the second floor to accommodate larger bathrooms.

Sounds like the McHales' resolutions might be taken care of for years to come. **III**

The bookcase and entertainment center in the cozy TV room was custom made with wood salvaged from old English buildings. Jean had it designed around the carved corbels at the top. Above, a view from the front door, past a working iron fountain in the center of the circular drive.



the projects
RANGE FROM MODEST TO EXPANSIVE...