

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2008

The Oregonian

HGNW

HOMES & GARDENS OF THE NORTHWEST

LIVING HISTORY

A DIY COUPLE TACKLE THEIR 1849 PROPERTY
WITH PIONEER SPIRIT/14



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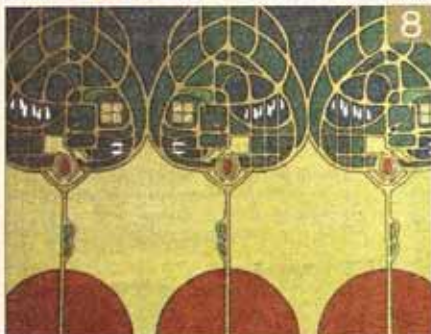
ON THE COVER

« Salvaged and weathered materials give character to the garden room on the property of the Classic Revival farmhouse.

Photo by Marv Bondarowicz THE OREGONIAN



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NW PRO | HOME DESIGN | By Ruth Mullen THE OREGONIAN

INTO THE WOODS

A hand-painted frieze summons up a Northwest forest



THE OWNERS |

Melody and Steve Von Ruden

THE GOAL |

A frieze was commissioned by previous homeowner Daniel Platter, an emergency room physician who loved the woods and sleeping outside in the wilderness. He wanted a 42-inch-tall hand-painted frieze that would evoke a highly stylized Pacific Northwest landscape, much like the pine-scented forest that surrounded his boyhood home.

"Trees appeal to me because they are the longest lived and highest form of life," he says. "When you stand in a red-wood forest, you feel life around you."

THE PROS |

CJ Hurley Century Arts, a studio operated by husband-and-wife team CJ Hurley and Barbara Pierce. They specialize in custom-designed, hand-painted interiors, fine art, and design and color consultation for historic homes.

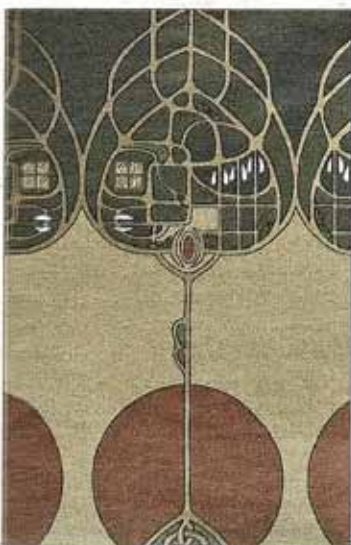
REVIVING A LOST ART |

Traditional hand-painted friezes date back to the Colonial era, when artists and architects were commissioned to design them as a decorative treatment on the walls, usually in the more formal rooms, such as the dining and living rooms. "What I do is kind of a dead art in the world of architecture," says Hurley. "You just don't see it anymore."

The custom faded, Hurley says, after World War II. "That was really the end of the hand-painted tradition in America."

ANCIENT ROOTS | A hand-painted frieze, above and right, by artist CJ Hurley evokes the stylized beauty of a Pacific Northwest forest. Former homeowner Daniel Platter, who commissioned the work, says it is called "Skogarikki," which means "Forest Kingdom" in Icelandic.

Photos by
Marv Bondarowicz
THE OREGONIAN



THE ARTISTS |

CJ Hurley and
Barbara Pierce

THE FIRM | CJ Hurley Century Arts

YEARS IN BUSINESS | Seven

SPECIALTY | Hand-painted friezes, period-style artwork and design, color and design consultations

CONTACT | 503-234-4167, www.cjhurley.com

INFLUENCES |

Hurley's work is informed by early-20th-century artists and architects, such as Charles Rennie Mackintosh, William Morris, Louis Comfort Tiffany, Victor Horta, the Greene Brothers and Frank Lloyd Wright. He also believes in the Arts and Crafts tenet that everything must be done by hand.

The studio specializes in the 1850-1950 era, which spans the reform movements, including Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Arts and Crafts, Art Nouveau, Jugendstil and Art Deco.

THE REAL THING |

When it comes to decorative friezes, Hurley has no use for plastic stencils or pricey reproduction wallpaper. He does everything freehand, using an adapted medieval paint similar to a kind used by another favorite artist, German Renaissance painter Albrecht Dürer. What's more, each of his frieze designs is original: He doesn't do repeats.

In this frieze, conifers form the crux of the landscape, while leafy deciduous trees create arbor-like gateways at each entrance to the dining room, and the roots are connected by Celtic knot formations. Smaller flowering elements represent the understory, while the deep-blue background evokes the forest sky at night. "You can sit in that room for hours and watch the light change," says Platter. "The gold just lights up."

CHALLENGES |

The size of the frieze, which extends from plate rail to cornice, was challenging. Achieving the required detailing required lots of scaffolding and a month of eight-hour-plus workdays.

THE BOTTOM LINE |

"I love to watch people's reactions when they walk in and see it," Melody Von Ruden says of the frieze. •

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FINE DINING |

Homeowners Melody and Steve Von Ruden use their ornate dining room every day, saying they love to watch the play of light in this dramatic room.

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Daniel Platter,
previous
homeowner