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MAGAZINE

**CHANNELING JULIA CHILD
LIVING AND LOVING ANTIQUES
MARK TIME WITH TWAIN
DIGGING DIRT FOR THE SOUL
TEN MINUTES WITH BILL BRENNAN**



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A photograph of a dining room. In the foreground, a rustic wooden table is set with a large, round, terracotta-colored pot containing a dense arrangement of light green hydrangea flowers. Two wooden chairs with curved backs are visible on either side of the table. In the background, a large window with multiple panes allows bright light into the room. Above the window, a black wrought-iron chandelier with several lit bulbs hangs from the ceiling. The wall above the window is painted a warm, reddish-orange color.

this old house

Living in, and loving, an antique. We take a look at three.

BY CAROLEYN RUNDLE FIELD | PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAM ROULEAU





A TIGHT FIT

The simple, elegant mantel in Peggy Garbus's living room is original to the house. Her family room also serves as a conference room, office, and dining room. In the mudroom, Garbus's photographs, her yellow lab Chloe, and a basket full of artifacts she and her children have unearthed.

their house the moment they entered. "We were willing to live with smaller rooms and lower ceilings in exchange for character," says Manny. Town records indicate the house dates from 1800. It was owned by the same family, the Abbotts, until 1963. "When we bought it, it had one bathroom, layers of paint on the stairs and floors, a mustard and turquoise dining room, and a yellow and red bedroom," says Manny, clearly amused.

It took them about a year to put their stamp on it. They stripped the floors and walls, and turned one of the upstairs bedrooms into a master bathroom. Later, they enclosed the sun porch to create a larger, updated kitchen. They replaced the garish color palette with historical colors, but left the original floors, doors, knobs and windows, even the cracked ones, intact. "The old doors and windows make the house drafty, but we didn't want to change them. We just live with them; they add charm," explains Manny.

The house is full of quirks, from the narrow, tilted staircase to the low railing at the top landing – people weren't as tall 200 years ago—and uneven floors, tricky for arranging furniture. "Nothing's level," he admits. Another surprise came when they tried to move their bedroom furniture upstairs in the master bedroom. "The staircase is so tight the furniture wouldn't fit. We had to remove the legs from the dresser and bed, and cut the headboard in half, then rebuild both in the bedroom," he laughs.

When they first moved in, they had mice, but their three dogs seem to have chased them away. "The first winter, we also discovered the house shakes and rattles when the snow plows go by, because it's so close to the road," Manny says. "But we love sitting in the living room or dining room with a roaring fire. And in the summer, when the light streams in, we feel like we're in the middle of a garden." ■