

Calendar

Presentations on political, legal, and financial aspects of effective preservation programs will be held at the Renaissance Cleveland Hotel. National Trust delegates can also visit the coinciding Restoration & Renovation Exhibition and Conference in Cleveland. For more information on the conference visit www.nthp.org.

Novi, Mich.
October 11-13
Fall Remodeling and Furniture Show

The show includes more than 200 exhibitors featuring the latest technology, products, and services for the home, from kitchens and baths to heating and electronics. The show will be held at Novi Expo

Center. Admission is \$6 for adults (children are admitted free). For more information on the show call (248) 862-1019 or visit www.builders.org.

Pasadena, Calif.
October 18-20

Craftsman Weekend
Sponsored by Pasadena Heritage, the weekend will offer a tour of six Craftsman-era houses, exhibits by antiques dealers specializing in the Arts & Crafts Movement, modern craftsmen working in the period style, restoration workshops, lectures by nationally prominent Craftsman historians, plus special evening events at historic sites. For more information on the weekend call (626) 441-6333 or visit www.pasadenaheritage.org.

Making Gillette Look Sharp



Fiber wall coverings (at right in the living room, above) and hand-carved door hardware (right) were some challenges of the Gillette restoration.

The mushroom factor—that phenomenon whereby a simple old-house project expands into a much more complex (and usually costly) venture—struck restorers of the eccentric fieldstone Gillette Castle in Hadlyme, Connecticut. An estimated \$3.5 million restoration ballooned to \$5.9 million—\$11 million with a new visitors center and accouterments.

The 24-room retirement home of Victorian actor William H. Gillette (best known for his portrayal of Sherlock Holmes), the Connecticut River estate on 184 acres was built in 1914 and acquired by the state in 1944. Gillette designed the craggy hilltop mansion to resemble a ruined European castle. Severe water damage since then had made it so unsafe that it was closed to the public in Sep-

tember 1998 and only reopened last Memorial Day.

In addition to practical matters like updating fire protection and wiring, the restoration team from Kronenberger and Sons had to deal with some of Gillette's quirky inventions, such as a dining room table that moves on tracks and a wood bar that locks into place, as well as his secret room and hidden staircase.

Gillette also designed the 42 heavy wooden doors, each with unique wooden hardware. Missing pieces had to be hand carved. Kronenberger removed and restored each of the 80 casement windows, repainting all their parts including mullions up to 4" deep; cleaned and restored 100 hand-carved light fixtures; and repointed the stone walls, including a dragon's head



near the main entry.

A textile restoration team, headed by Camille Breeze of Andover, Massachusetts, cleaned and restored 4,000 square feet (front and back) of a raffia-like wallcovering. (It was sold at the time for floors, similar to sisal.) Twelve yards of it were re-woven from raffia imported from Madagascar; bright colored stenciling and dyes had to be brought back to life. The wallcovering alone required the attention of four people—three of them full time—for six months. For more information call (860) 526-2336.

PHOTOS BY JACK MCCONNELL