

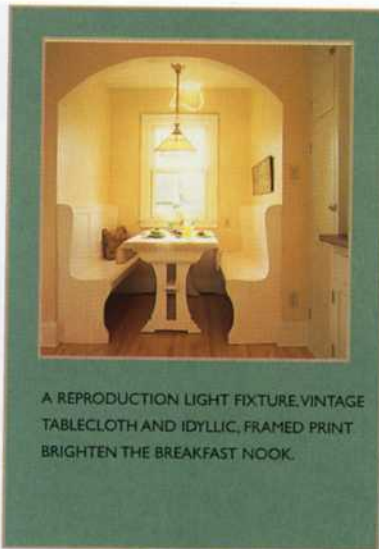
THE AFFORDABLE

BUNGALOW INTERIOR

BY TIM COUNTS



PHOTOGRAPHY BY WILLIAM CLARK



A REPRODUCTION LIGHT FIXTURE, VINTAGE TABLECLOTH AND IDYLIC, FRAMED PRINT BRIGHTEN THE BREAKFAST NOOK.

I purchased my home several years ago, choosing it primarily because it was within my price range, but also because words such as “cozy” and “charming” came to mind the first time I walked through. Only later did I discover the word “bungalow” also applied, and I began a process now familiar to so many – that of gleeful immersion into the subculture of the Arts and Crafts revival.

Soon I was perusing lushly photographed coffee-table books of handsome bungalow interiors. I’d lose myself in an historical domestic fantasy, only to be yanked rudely back to reality upon looking up at my own mongrel rooms. When many of us purchased our houses, who among us knew what a bungalow was, much less what its seminal-style furnishings were?

Even if we *were* aware, who could afford to outfit it like an illustration from *The Craftsman*? So, we furnished our homes with a comfortable but anachronistic mix of Suburban Modern, French Country Fluffy and

Contempo Assemble-It-Yourself.

Ah, to start again from scratch. But the *cost*. Have you seen what even a simple Roycroft candlestick goes for? Let’s face it: Many of the homes in those photo spreads belong to Hollywood producers with the wherewithal to hire the best designers and shop at the finest auction houses. If you don’t have that kind of cash – take heart; the original owners of these houses didn’t fill them with priceless antiques, and you don’t have to either. After all, a goal of early bungalow advocates was to create affordable, yet artistic, dwellings.



REPAIRED POTTERY PIECES, SUCH AS THE VASE HOLDING FLOWERS, CAN BE FOUND – AND ARE MUCH LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THOSE IN MINT CONDITION.



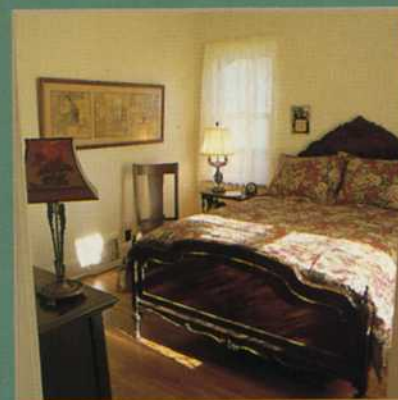
A BUNGALOW’S INTERIOR CAN HAVE AN ARTS AND CRAFTS LOOK, WITHOUT COSTING A FORTUNE.



LIVING COMFORTABLY BUT WITHIN ONE'S MEANS WAS A PRIORITY FOR THE ORIGINAL TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY BUNGALOW DWELLERS.



THE ENGLISH BED WITH ART NOUVEAU CARVINGS WAS PURCHASED FOR \$500; THE EMBROIDERED PILLOW SHAM WAS \$20. THE PASTEL ON THE WALL BELONGED TO THE AUTHOR'S GRANDMOTHER.



DIFFERENT 1920S FURNITURE STYLES COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER IN THE SAME HOUSE

THE BOTTOM LINE

Discussing in public what one pays for one's possessions is admittedly tacky, but my intention is not to boast or confess, but to offer some point of reference for bungalow owners of modest means. So here goes: I furnished my two-bedroom, 1,087-square-foot, 1926 bungalow for less than \$15,000. That figure will likely make some readers gasp in horror and others suspicious as to how I got by so cheaply. If it sounds high, consider that the project took five years to complete. That's about \$3,000 a year, which isn't pocket change but is roughly what most people spend on car payments. (With more time and discipline, it could be done for even less.) And that figure includes everything: furniture, rugs, all light fixtures, curtains, bedclothes, paintings and assorted accouterments. If \$15,000 sounds low, consider that I live in the Midwest, where antique prices are generally less. Perhaps you are a connoisseur of rare antiques, which is fine, but most of us must begin on a more modest scale.

The furniture styles in my home are eclectic, but are mostly from the early 20th century. I believe they blend well, give the interior a comfortable, unstudied look, and cost far less than a strictly Arts and Crafts collection. The original bungalow dwellers had a mix of furniture, most likely pieces from the Victorian era that had been handed down. If you already have a cherished pressed-back rocker or Art Deco lamp, try to work it in.

The point is this: You can assemble an interior to rival those in the

glossy books without resorting to a life of crime or waiting until your aunt bequeaths you her Teco collection. Whether you want to undertake a complete redo of your bungalow's interior or just add period pieces as your furniture needs replacing, I think you may find something helpful in my own experience.

HOMEWORK

I began by trying to absorb the style of the bungalow, reading as many of those magazines, catalogs and books as I could. This was a mixed experience, as I was swept away by the beauty of the rooms but disheartened by calculating what they must have cost to assemble. In the long run it was helpful, though, because I knew what to look for, and even better, I was able to recognize something unusual but appropriate when it came along.

A little networking helped me find local people who had created period-sensitive interiors. Unless you have a reputation for filching silver, most homeowners will be delighted to show you the results of their efforts. Compliment and remember what you like; keep quiet about what you don't.

GROUND RULES

I'm lucky to have a supportive partner with not only a terrific eye for style and composition, but also a tough-love attitude toward money: If you don't have it, don't spend it. The first rule we made was not to go into debt. I set up a furnishing fund and spent no more than could be paid in full at the end of the month. This is not the American Way, I realize, but there's nothing as dispiriting as

