

STORY BY  
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# MAKING AN ENTRANCE

A NEW FRONT  
DOOR WILL  
MAXIMIZE YOUR  
HOME'S CURB  
APPEAL



*Whether you are selecting a pre-hung door or a slab that will be fit into a pre-existing frame, it's important to choose a door that complements your home's architecture. This arched design with side panels created from antique doors and salvaged lumber by La Puerta Originals creates a simple yet elegant entrance to a residence in Santa Fe, N.M.*

*NEVER UNDERESTIMATE THE POWER OF A FIRST IMPRESSION—*

so believes Melissa Coleman of La Puerta Originals in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Her company creates welcoming entryways for homeowners seeking doors “with a story and meaning behind them,” she says.

La Puerta uses reclaimed wood, typically Douglas fir, as well as antique doors from Mexico and Southeast Asia in their designs. Panels and carvings from different doors are often combined to make new creations.

“A front door can make a profound statement,” says Coleman, the company’s president and owner. “Look at the doors on cathedrals and what they say about what to expect inside.”

After drawings are made, careful measurements taken and all materials selected for a project, La Puerta’s artisans build a pre-hung unit, which includes the door, hinges, frame, weather stripping and hardware. “Everything we build is custom and comes ready to shim in place,” she says, noting her husband Scott, who founded the business, trained as an architect and is an artist and designer who started making doors in his garage 30 years ago.

Many pre-hung doors on the market, available from commercial distributors as well as home improvement stores, have a frame and holes bored for hardware but don’t include the handles and lock sets, says Erik Barsch of Barsch Woodworks in Denver.

Whether you’re selecting a pre-hung door or a slab that will need to be fit into a pre-existing frame, Barsch says that it’s important to be true to your home’s architectural style. That consideration will help you choose a door that’s made of wood, metal or fiberglass, as well as the type of hardware, glass or sidelights it contains.

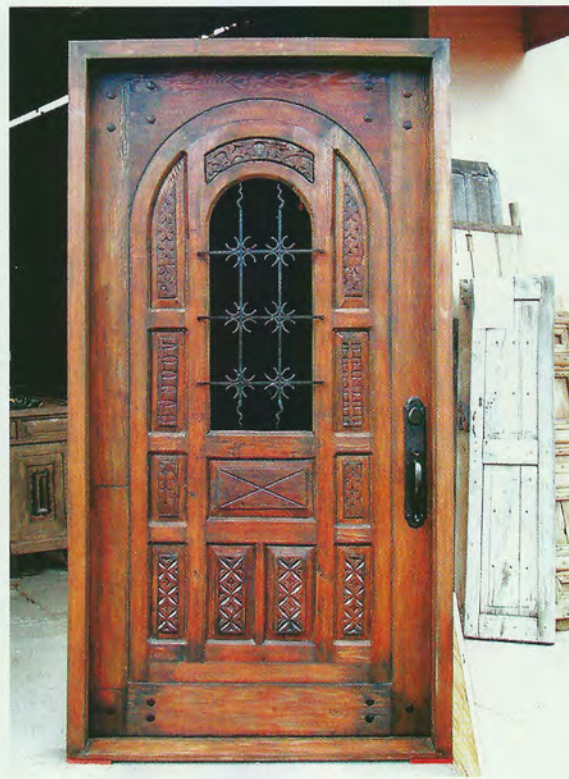
It helps to know the properties of various wood types. “With dry climates, some woods aren’t as stable,” Barsch says. “We like to use white oak and mahogany. Reclaimed woods are good because they have already been exposed to the elements. One wood I’d stay away from for exterior doors is alder because it is soft and tends to shrink and expand.”

He also notes that door installation is not something for a DIY newbie to tackle. “Remember that the front of the house will be opened up, so make sure the door and hardware can be installed in one day.”

For all the considerations in such a project, Barsch says a new door is a good investment. “I think it’s a huge priority because it’s the first thing you see.”

LA PUERTA ORIGINALS, [lapuertaoriginals.com](http://lapuertaoriginals.com)

BARSCH WOODWORKS, [barschwoodworks.net](http://barschwoodworks.net)



ABOVE, FROM LEFT: This reproduction door made from reclaimed Douglas fir has sidelights, bronze thumb latch entry hardware and decorative clavos (Spanish for “nails”). Antique carved panels, reclaimed Douglas fir and custom grillwork on the window of custom template glass highlight a new design that looks vintage. Both creations from La Puerta Originals.

Seasonal plants and flowers are a welcoming touch at the entrance to any home. Another way to freshen the front door is to have the wood painted or stained. This entryway from La Puerta Originals in Santa Fe, N.M., is made from antique panels and salvaged lumber, and the windows are accented with custom grillwork.



## *SPRING SPRUCE-UP*

The arrival of warm weather provides an opportunity for sprucing up the entry to your home. Short of replacing the front door, there are a number of ways to update your entrance. Debra Browne of Harrison Browne Interior Design Ltd., based in Denver and Aspen, Colorado, shares a few of her top tips. [harrisonbrowne.com](http://harrisonbrowne.com)

**GO GREEN** Put fresh blooming plants outside in pots that complement your architecture and decor.

**COLOR YOUR WORLD** Painting the door and trim or restaining the wood is always an option, as is updating hardware or adding a knocker.

**LIGHTING** In addition to refreshing outdoor lighting fixtures, consider adding "up" lights. "I like to put up lights in plants on either side of the entryway, or just add spots to give cool effects to the front of the house."

**WELCOME MATS** Something else that's easy to update is a door mat outside and a rug in the interior entryway. "I love Frontgate. They have an amazing selection of monogrammed rugs."

**THE LITTLE THINGS** Pay attention to details, like your doorbell or mailbox. If they are dated, your exterior will feel the same way, she says.

**SITTING PRETTY** A front porch begs guests to sit, particularly in warm weather. And just inside the home, a bench or chair can be both decorative and functional. Change pillows seasonally.