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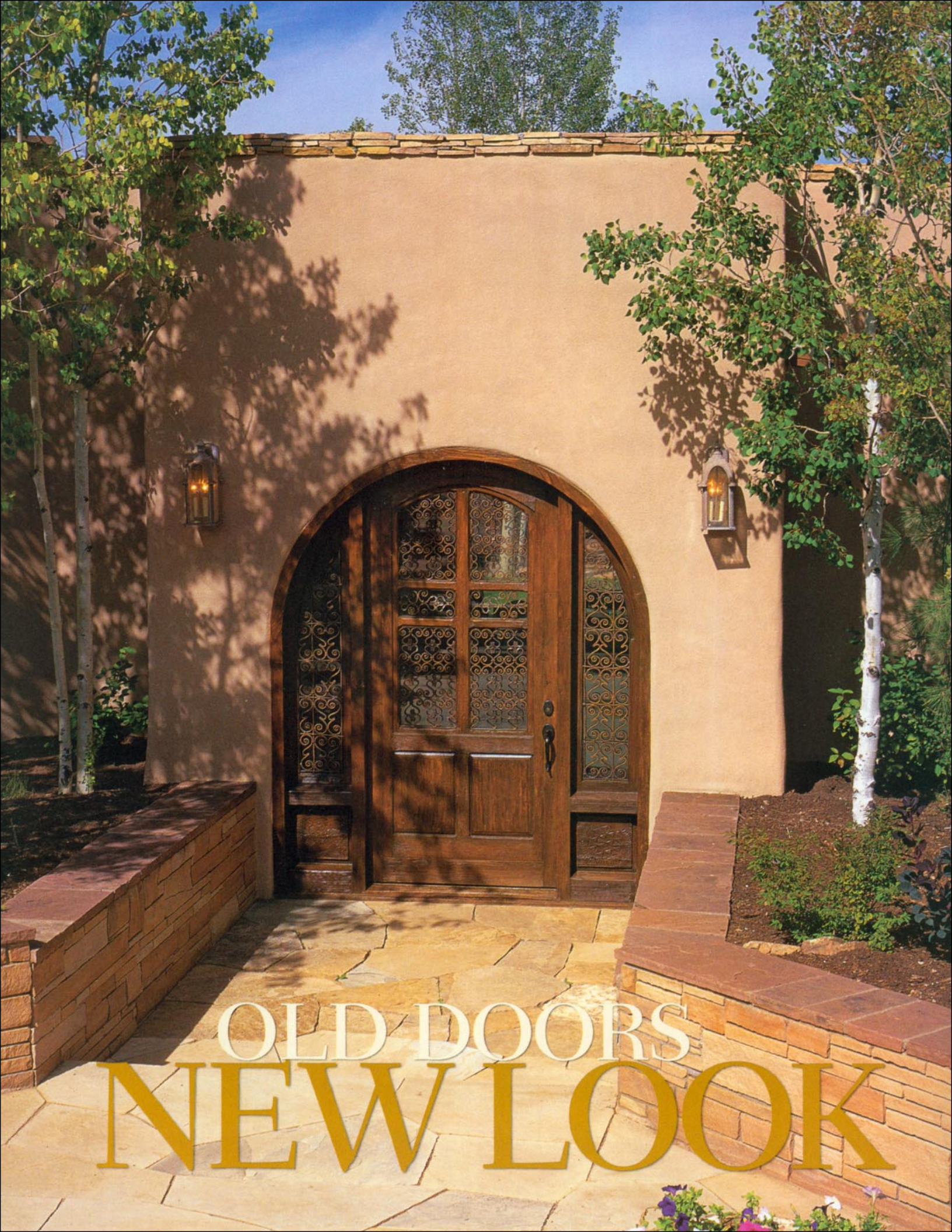
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THE ROMANCE OF ANTIQUE WOOD

For Melissa and Scott Coleman, antique wood is not just their business but their passion. All of the doors in their newly-remodeled Santa Fe home are architectural antiques. Because none of these 200-year-old doors come in what is now a standard size (many are over-sized), the window openings and doorways were enlarged with the additional benefit of allowing more light and better views into the home. Some of the unique doors were turned into tables—in the kitchen and dining room. Elements from others (too worn to be used as doors) were crafted into the Colemans' monumental bed in the master bedroom. *For more, turn to page 56.*



OLD DOORS
NEW LOOK



**ARCHITECTURAL SALVAGE FINDS A
NEW HOME IN A SANTA FE CONTEMPORARY**

STORY BY LESLIE PETROVSKI

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL NADELBACH STYLING BY GILDA MEYER-NIEHOF



OPENING PAGES: The Colemans' contemporary home is a showcase for their Santa Fe-based business, La Puerta, which reworks antique wood for use in new construction and furniture. THIS PAGE, TOP LEFT: A bronze sculpture by Glenna Goodacre stands in the garden. TOP RIGHT: The dining table was made from reclaimed antique timbers inset with carved door fragments. ABOVE: Story Coleman walks through an open panel in an antique door. OPPOSITE PAGE: The lap pool provides a pleasant venue for exercise or relaxation.

It was one of those houses with good bones in a great location where some 1980s esthetic choices had been made. Like a powder-blue and pink kitchen.

Sequestered on six tangled acres of piñon-juniper forest just five minutes from Santa Fe's Plaza, the house, built in 1985, had what realtors call "tremendous potential for the right buyer." And it languished on the market.

In 2001 Melissa and Scott Coleman toured the house. Melissa, with her background in museum fundraising (she had worked for the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian and Santa Fe's Institute of American Indian Arts), had a tidy collection of contemporary Indian art and a strong esthetic sense. Scott, an architect and custom builder, had launched an architectural antiques business in the early 1990s that Melissa now ran.

Buttressed by Atalaya Mountain and equipped with a lap pool, the house was a fine blank canvas and they knew it. Unphased by the blue ceramic floor tile throughout the house, they made an offer immediately. And on the day they closed, a crew gutted the place, taking it down to the studs.

The house, as they purchased it, felt cold and austere. "We knew we could warm it up," Melissa says. "We wanted it to be a very warm and comfortable place to raise our family and have friends and guests over."

All the windows, doors and interior finishes went. Window openings and doorways were enlarged to afford better views of the New Mexican landscape. The drop ceiling was removed. Walls were relocated. Workers re-stuccoed the exterior, demolished the courtyard wall and added stone caps to the parapets. The goal: create a child-friendly family space (the Colemans have two young children, Chance and Story) as well as provide a showcase for the custom doors, cabinets and woodwork produced by their company, La Puerta Originals.

Today the house is a living testament to how 200-year-old carvings from Pakistan and salvaged wood from Eastern Europe can augment contemporary construction. All of the wood in the home is recycled. Scott >>







LEFT: The painting over the fireplace is by Santa Fe artist William DeBilzan. FAR LEFT: Scott designed the grand four-poster bed, made from a mélange of vintage Mexican columns, American woods and carved panels from Pakistan.

“I LOVE THE CRACKS IN MY DOORS. THERE’S A MEMORY IN THAT WOOD AND DOOR THAT YOU DON’T GET WITH A NEW PRODUCT.”

estimates that the wood fitted throughout the house—in doors, transoms, floors, cabinets and mantles—derives from as many as eight countries.

The doors are what Melissa calls a “United Nations of doors,” a pastiche of wood from the United States, Mexico, and antique carvings culled from the Swat Valley in Northern Pakistan and India. The home contains 35 doors, and each one tells a story. The door to the master bedroom, for example, originally formed the entry for a mosque in India.

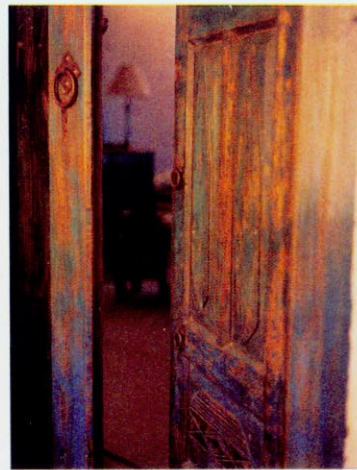
The doors have their own color and patina, each receiving a custom organic stain or a simple wax, to enhance a peeling antique paint or play up the beauty of the wood. Chance’s bedroom door is a bright denim blue, and his bathroom door greenish yellow. Other doors glow in warm browns and blues, creating a wonderful cacophony of color.

“You go into new houses,” Melissa observes, “and everything looks the same. A machine-made door doesn’t have the beauty of a hand-carved door. I love the cracks in my doors. There’s a memory in that wood and door that you don’t get with a new product. It’s just not there.”

“We live in a manufactured society,” Scott adds. “That’s why we’re used to having all doors be the same. But in this house every door has a unique purpose, and they all work together like a family.”

All of La Puerta’s products are re-milled, reconstructed and retrofitted in Santa Fe. In fact, many of the breathtaking pieces hanging in the Coleman house were originally created for customers. “If a client comes in >>>





and can't decide between two or three artifacts," Scott says, "we will make several. And they can pick the product they like the best." Many of La Puerta's leftovers found their way into the Colemans' renovation.

Wherever possible, the couple incorporated examples of La Puerta's handcrafted, reworked products. An antique Douglas fir floor rescued from an old warehouse in Northern California was retrofitted to the space, adding warmth to the 4,800-square-foot home. Reclaimed timber frames the windows, some of which hailed from the Presidio in San Francisco. Intricate hand-carved mantles bracket the fireplaces.

"We bring people here to show them how you live with our products," Melissa explains. "It's almost impossible to describe. There's no other company that manufactures on the scale we do using antique reclaimed materials. It doesn't fit into a box."

Most of the elements in the home were included with an eye to the past. The walls received a buttery yellow hand texturing in gypsum plaster and were slathered with a water-based sealer to add shine. This lends a mottled look to the surface that more closely resembles old adobe walls.

Though the Colemans have lived in the home four years, it is still a work in progress. The bathrooms haven't been touched, and they harbor desires to create a fabulous master bathroom and add an attached kid's room and laundry room by the pool.

"I'm married to an architect," Melissa says wryly, "so the work on my house will never be done." ■

DESIGN BOOK

Homeowner/Designer Scott Coleman (homeowner)

Interior Design Melissa Coleman (homeowner)

Builder Scott Coleman & Associates (homeowner)

Antique Doors La Puerta Originals

Santa Fe, New Mexico, (505) 984-8164, lapuertaoriginals.com

Landscape Consulting Jyoti Parry, J. Parry Design

Santa Fe, New Mexico, (505) 603-1872

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The home's original vigas striate the ceiling in the sunny entryway. Cabinets fashioned from reconstructed Eastern European cedar and pine rim the kitchen, the lower ones stained a rich, piney green. A small table—the kitchen's island—blushes a rich paprika stain. Three-year-old Story Coleman plays peek-a-boo behind weathered antique doors. Melissa Coleman looking very Euro with her sunflowers and vintage scooter, a gift from her husband.