



Opposite: Designed by architects Oliver Perry Dennis and Lyman Farwell, known for their chateau-style architectural designs, Kimberly Crest was built in 1897 to resemble the French châteaux of the Loire Valley. The extensive grounds surrounding Kimberly Crest were made into Italian-style gardens and vignettes such as “Grandmother’s Rose Garden.”

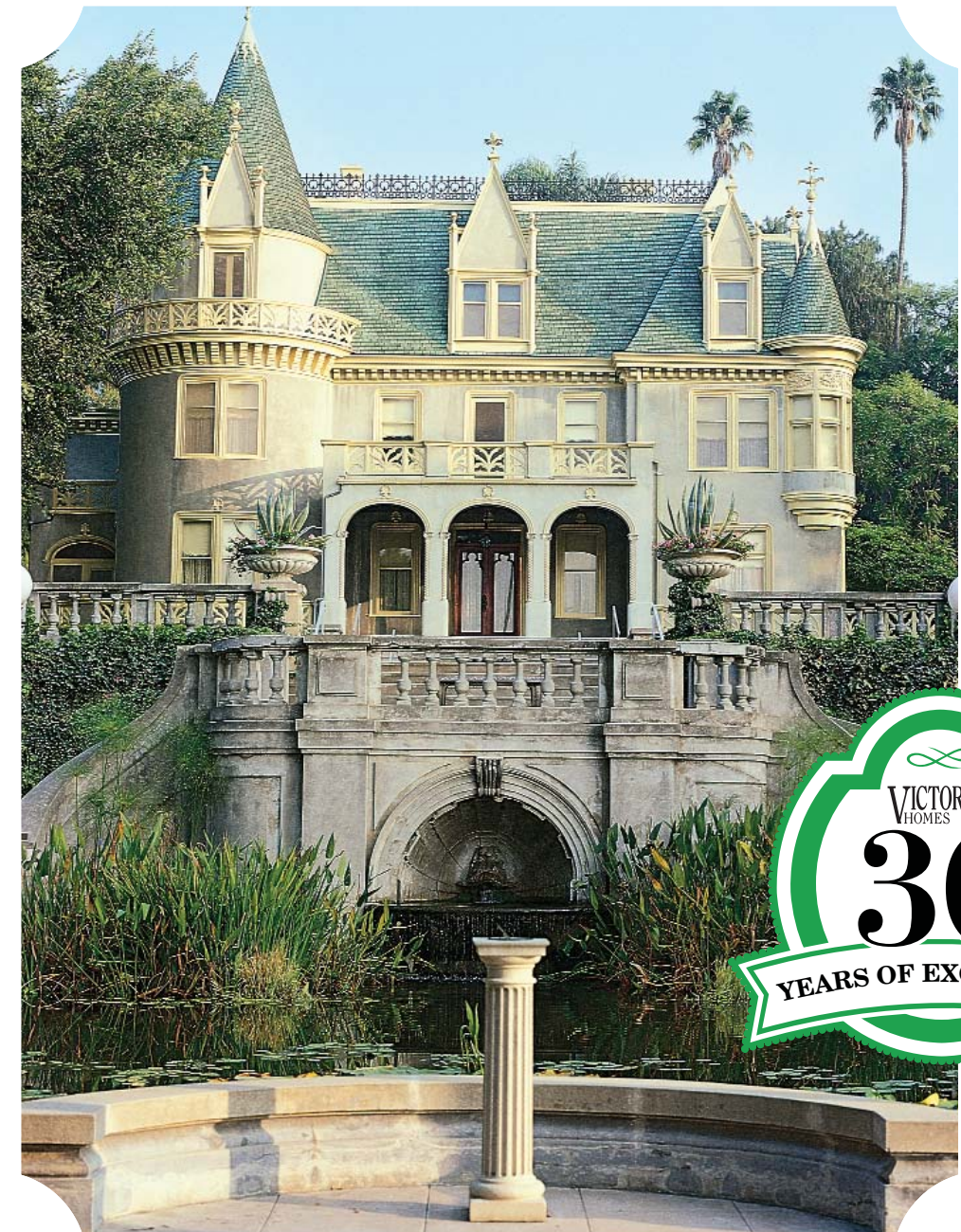
To commemorate our 30th anniversary, in this first installment of “Look Back” we hobnob with Industrial Age royals. When “Château Kimberly” graced our February 2001 cover, the result was one of our best-selling issues. Our collective curiosity to see what’s inside Kimberly Crest was as big as the home itself! As former editor Erika Kotite writes, the décor and gardens don’t disappoint—and continue to inspire—because this grand dame illustrates a preservation success story, too. —H.B.

LOOK BACK

A California Castle

Revisiting a best-selling issue, we find decorating inspiration, a DIY wall treatment and more to make the trip worthwhile.

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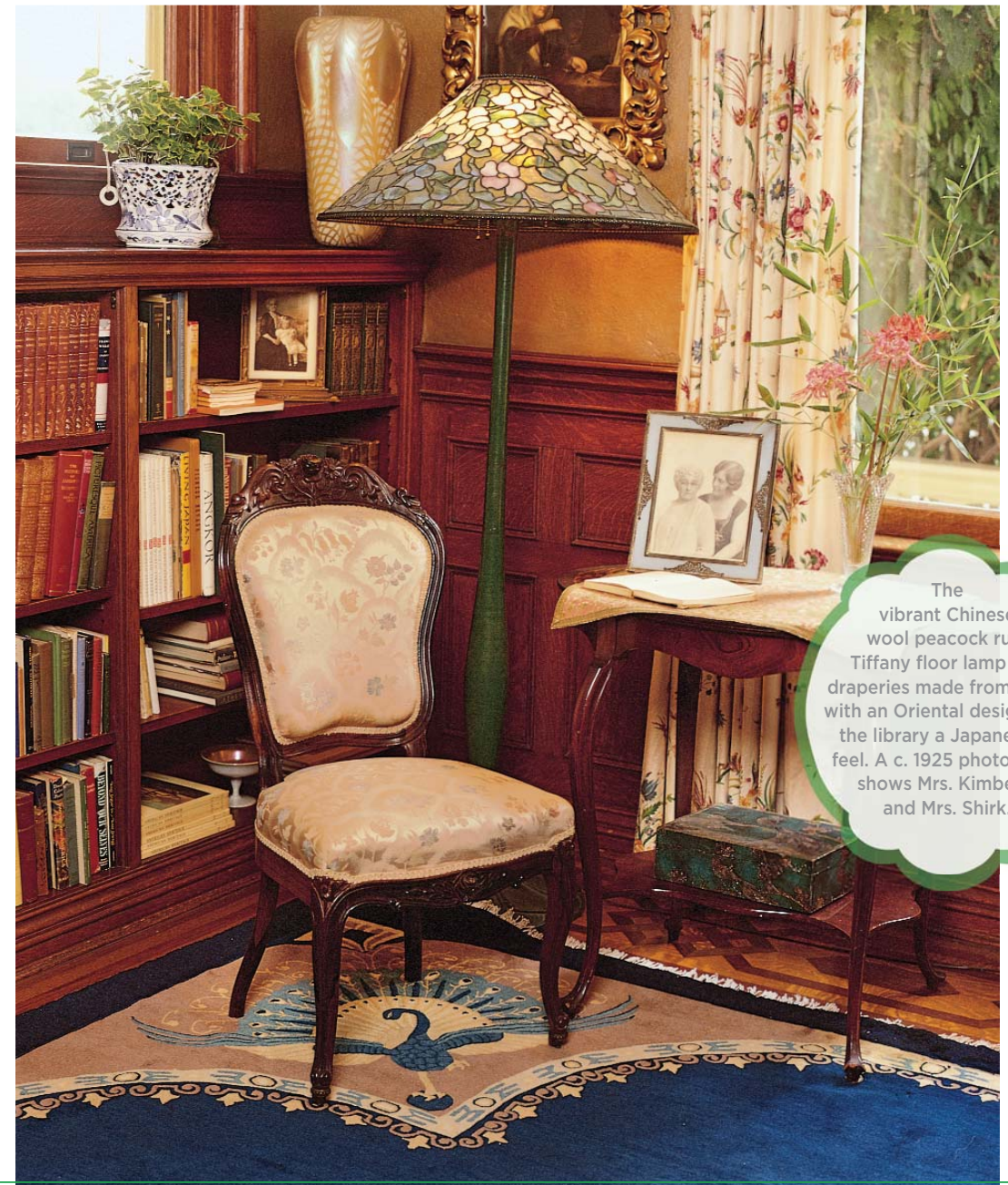


Mrs. Kimberly conducted "at homes" every month, except for the year or so she spent redecorating the formal parlor in a lavish French style. Silk Scalamandré draperies (recreated to match the aging ones) and gilded Louis XV- and XVI-style furniture create a feminine room.



THE WARM, DRY CLIMATE OF CALIFORNIA'S INLAND EMPIRE made a perfect spot for citrus and avocado groves in the late-19th century. It also was a magnet for the chilled upper classes that could afford to spend their winters away from the Midwest and East Coast. The Kimberly family, co-founders of the famed Kimberly-Clark Corporation, fell in love with the agricultural beauty of Southern California and placed their mark upon it with a legacy of a stately home and long-standing community service.

J. Alfred and Helen Kimberly began traveling to Redlands in 1899, 27 years after Kimberly founded Kimberly, Clark and Co. with his three partners in Neenah, Wisconsin. Their idea was to have a home in both places, and they began looking for a residence that would have room for their sons, daughters and grandchildren when they came to visit. When the French château-style house owned by Mrs. Cornelia Hill came up for sale, the Kimberlys bought it in 1905 and dubbed it Kimberly Crest. Swiftly, the Kimberlys became an



The vibrant Chinese wool peacock rug, Tiffany floor lamp and draperies made from fabric with an Oriental design give the library a Japanesque feel. A c. 1925 photograph shows Mrs. Kimberly and Mrs. Shirk.

FAUX PAINTING FROM THE PAST

The walls in the dining room and the library at Kimberly Crest emit a wonderful silvery glow; some walls have a bronze color mixed in with the silver. The key ingredient, says Kim Gordon, a paint specialist in Los Angeles, California, is metallic powder. "It was probably a mixture of powder and shellac," she says. "The effect can be closely replicated today using products available in most paint and crafts stores."

To get this wonderful shine in your own home:

- Experiment with a mix of metallic powder (pewter or silver) and water-based satin varnish. (Warning: Metallic powder is a very fine dust that is toxic and easily inhaled. Use extreme caution and be sure to wear a mask.)
- For an old-fashioned technique, use shellac instead of varnish. "Orange shellac is one of my favorite materials," Gordon says. "It gives a nice amber glow to everything. However, it dries quickly and is more difficult to use."
- Use approximately ¼-cup powder to one gallon of varnish; more metallic will result in an opaque look, less metallic will provide a sheer look.
- Mix it well and roll it onto paint-ready walls. Allow to dry, then roll on another coat.
- For a two-toned look, purchase a second metallic powder in a bronze shade of your choice. Mix small amounts of the powder and varnish into a paste on a dinner plate. Then, using a very large stipple brush, apply it onto the walls. "You want to gently 'mash' the brush against the wall, keeping the design tight," Gordon explains. For an antiqued look, apply the bronze only to the corners and edges of a room. —E.K.

In the main hall, silk damask wall panels, carved oak and a large Heriz rug provide a fitting backdrop for the two parlor sets. The rosewood set on the right is by Meeks and is upholstered in pastel green and rose cut velvet.



integral part of their community, literally opening their doors so that townspeople could see the beautiful renovations and additions. Mrs. Kimberly, and later her youngest daughter, Mrs. Mary Emma Shirk, became active in educational and civic affairs, and the family as a whole was commended for their generosity to the community.

THE ROAD TO THE FUTURE

In 1963, the town residents were attempting to buy a large botanical park near Kimberly Crest for the city of Redlands. Fundraising stalled until 1968, when Mrs. Shirk promised to donate her home to the city if the needed funds were raised. Seven months later, they raised the money. True to her word, Mrs. Shirk willed her house to the city, and the Kimberly-Shirk Association assumed ownership in 1981. Because Kimberly Crest remained in the same family until it was given to the Kimberly-Shirk Association, all of the original furniture, art, books and decorative accessories remain for the enjoyment of visitors.

Kimberly Crest is open for tours and events. For more information, call (909) 792-2111 or visit kimberlycrest.org.

SEE SOURCES, PAGE 94.