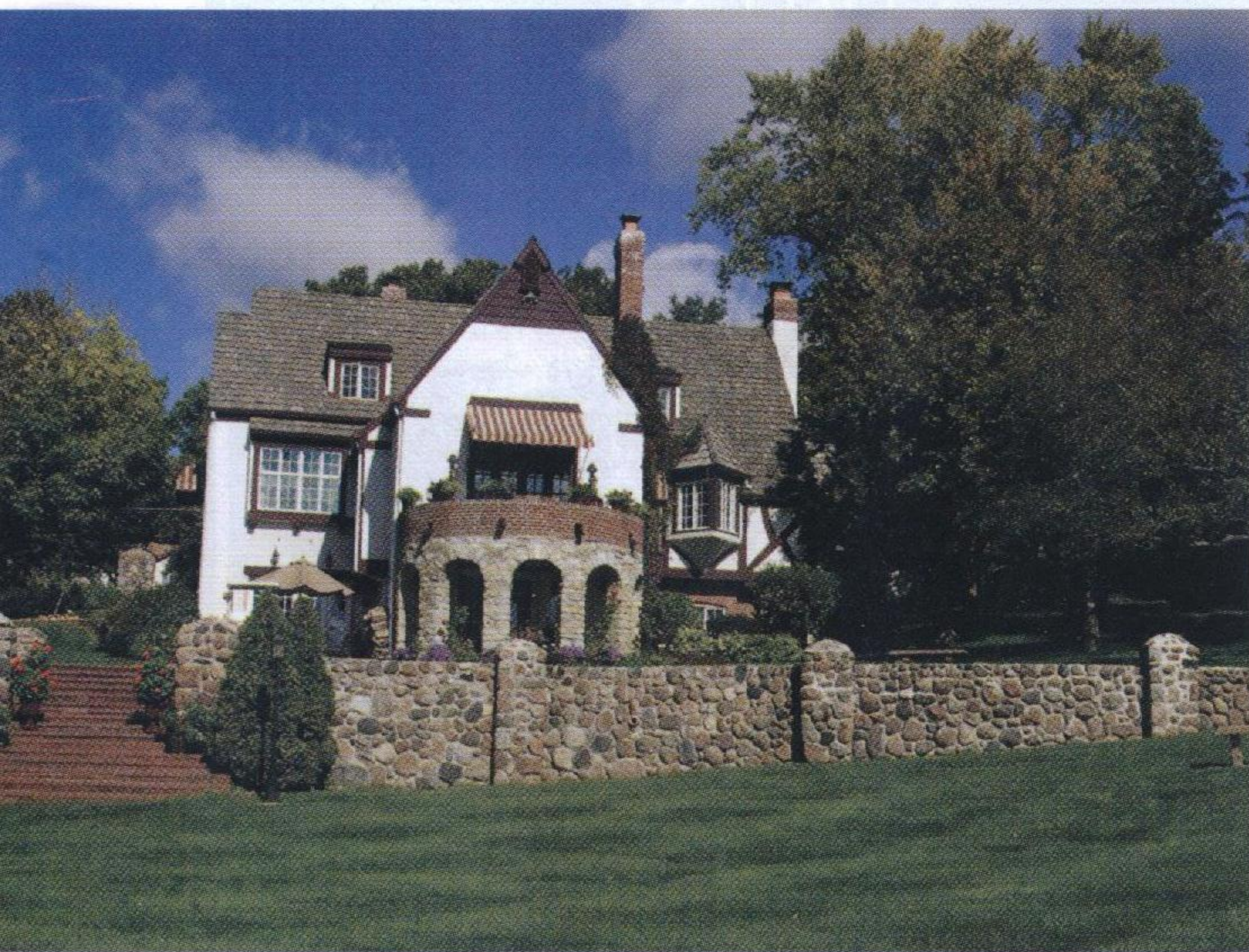


A POSH OLD Soul

MAHOGANY BAY OWNER F. TODD WARNER WAITED 23 YEARS TO BUY HIS DREAM HOME ON HARDSCRABBLE POINT. NOW, HE SPENDS HIS LIFE REVELLING IN ITS HISTORY.

BY JULIE PFITZINGER PHOTOS BY MARSHALL FRANKLIN LONG



Whether the subject is vintage boats or elegant older homes, F. Todd Warner always has been drawn to true originals. “Living authentically is important to me,” he says. “You can’t put ‘old soul’ into a new house or into a new boat. There’s a special energy that exists in the history.”



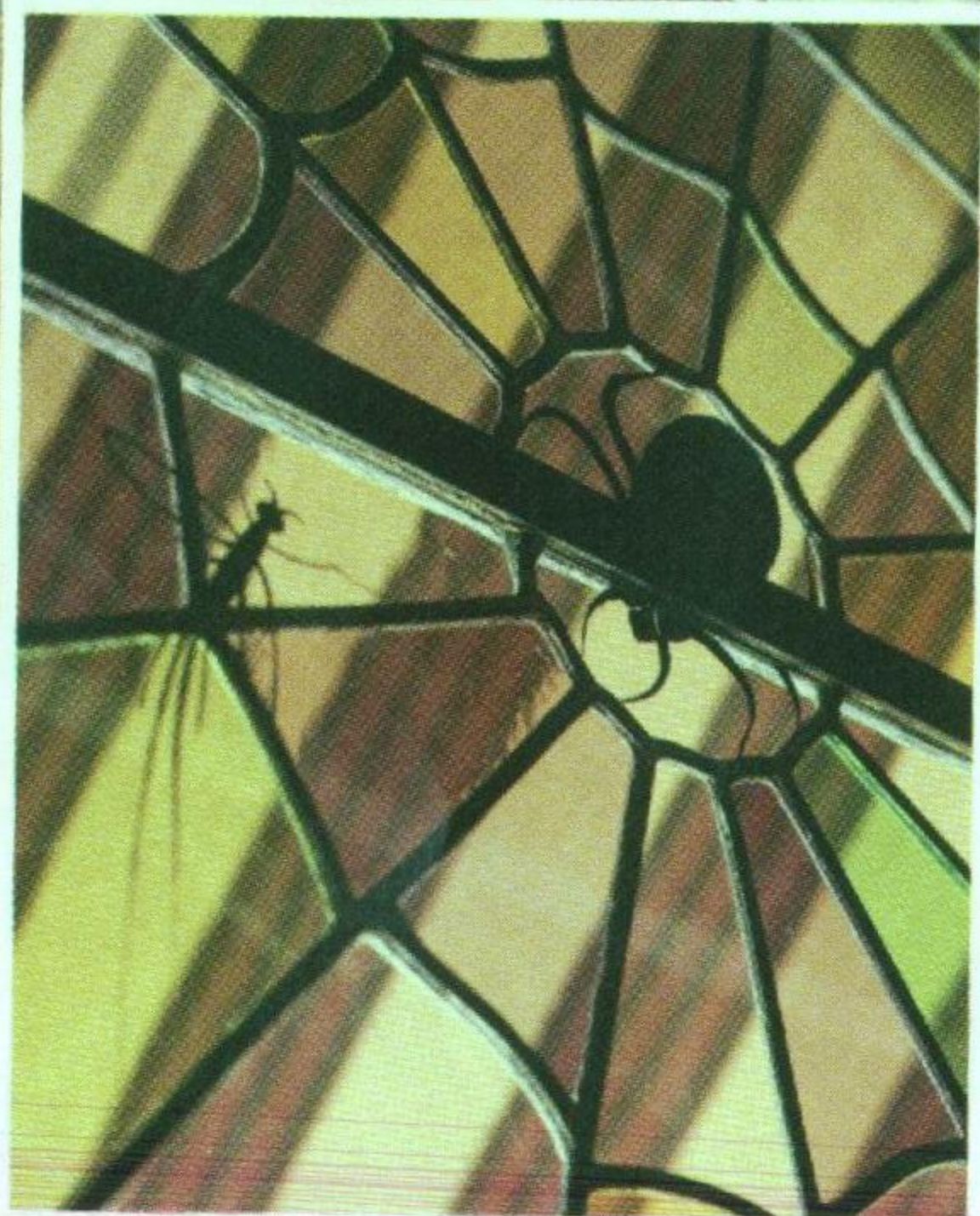
POSH

Warner, the founder and CEO of Mahogany Bay in Mound, has been in the business of selling, servicing and restoring some of the finest vintage boats in the world for more than 30 years. If you spend time on Lake Minnetonka in the summer, you’ve likely seen “POSH,” the flagship of the Mahogany Bay collection, cruising the lake. Built in 1937, this 53-foot Hackercraft commuter originally belonged to members of the Cooper family of St. Louis Park’s Cooper Theater fame. “POSH actually stands for ‘Port Out, Starboard Home.’”

DETAIL LOG:

Nautical History

Warner's home contains many items and works of art related not only to vintage boats but to Minnetonka history as well, including a set of architectural drawings, rendered in 1892, depicting several Lake Minnetonka area homes.



DETAIL LOG:

Wrought-iron Artwork

A second floor window, directly over the front door of the home, features a large wrought-iron spider web, complete with a spider. "This used to be known as the Halloween house," F. Todd Warner says. "The Gellman family, who owned the home after the Smabys, handed out apples and Cracker Jacks for many years."

This was the way to travel in the steamer ships that sailed between the United States and Europe—the term indicated the cooler, more comfortable sides of the ships," Warner says. "Posh living was really a step above first class."

It was Warner's late friend, Bob Speltz, a longtime member of the Land O' Lakes Antique and Classic Boat Society chapter, who originally coined the term "posh" for the elegant wooden boat in Mahogany Bay's collection, and it stuck. "This boat is truly a national treasure," says Warner, adding that several charity events have been hosted aboard POSH through the years.

On the Water

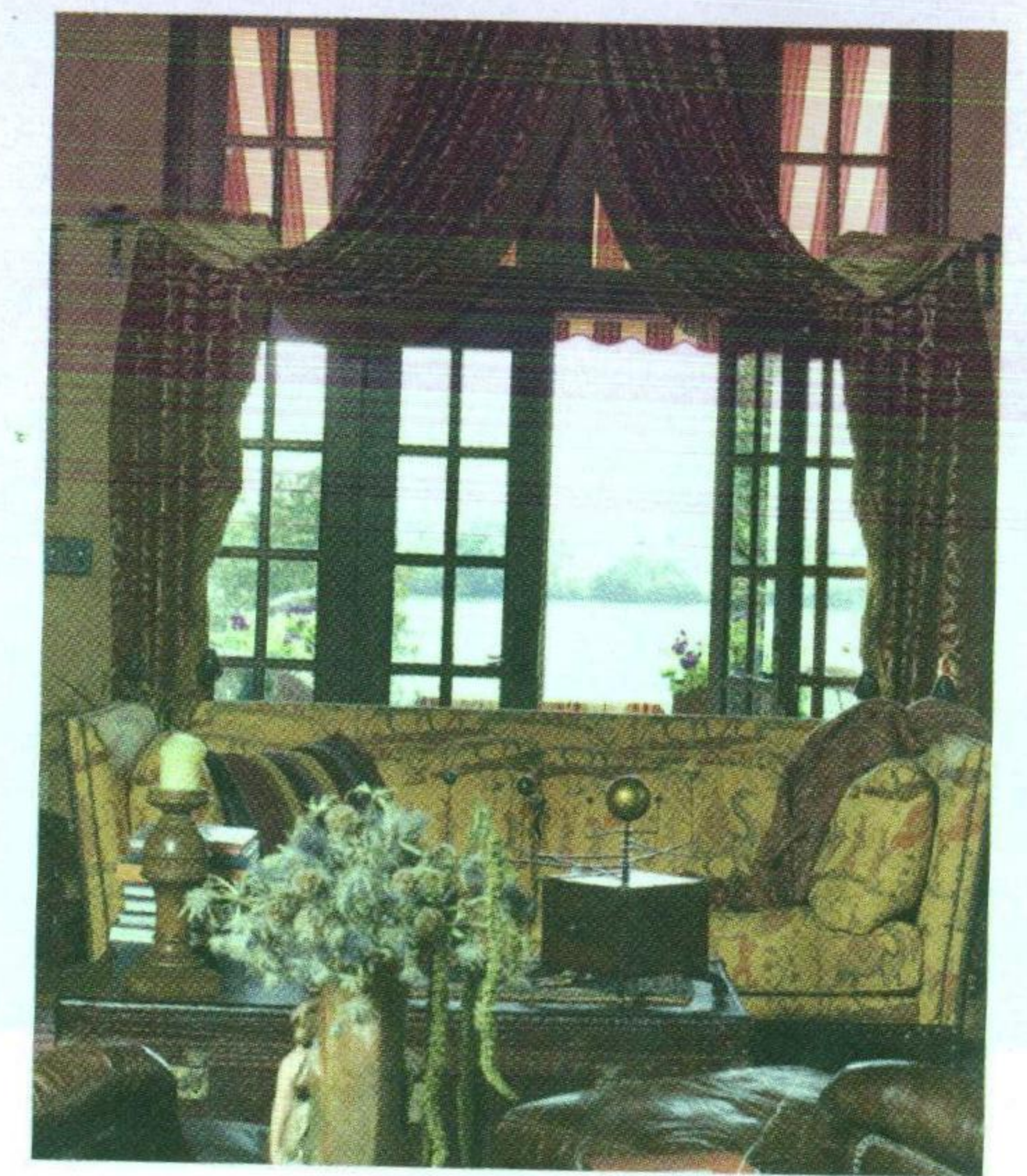
Warner's passion for the water has been enhanced by the spectacular view of Lake Minnetonka's Hardscrabble Point that he

enjoys every day from the windows of his charming vintage "storybook style" home now known as Stonehedge.

"This was a house I waited 23 years to buy," says Warner, a lifelong area resident. Ten years ago, I heard that it was going to go on the market, and the very next day, I was making the deal with the owners."

Built in 1923 by Martin Smaby of Minneapolis, the whimsically styled house was in need of extensive remodeling by the time Warner purchased it. "From 2002 until 2006, I completely renovated the entire place," he says. "Electrical, heating, windows, insulation, every painted surface—you name it." At one point during the renovation process, Warner's home was featured on HGTV's *Before and After* program.

While staying true to the integrity of the house, Warner also added many unique



touches during the remodeling. For instance, the small original kitchen, located on the main floor, is still finished with dark wood cabinetry, but is now offset by a beautiful hand-painted ceiling, done in rich pastel shades.

Other one-of-a-kind, hand-painted designs are featured in the home's bathrooms (the master bath showcases beautifully textured *Lady's Slippers*) and in a second floor guest room known as "The Sunset Room," colored in soothing shades of blue and rose to simulate the beautiful view of the actual sunset directly outside the room's window, facing the lake.

A warm butterscotch tone in the living room provides just the right accent to the classic wrought-iron fixtures and comfortable, inviting décor, but the most eye-catching feature of the living room is



Herring Gull

BY THE NUMBERS:

Mahogany Bay Boats

In addition to POSH, Warner also regularly takes to the lake on a Camper & Nicholson boat called Herring Gull, built in 1926, that served as a yacht tender for boats owned by the Vanderbilts. He also has a smaller, classic Riva model that he refers to as “a jet ski for adults.”

Through the years, Mahogany Bay’s customers have included members of several prominent Minnesota families as well as celebrities like actor Nicolas Cage, who recently purchased a vintage boat from the company.

Mahogany Bay employs 19 people in its shops who work year-round on restoring and caring for vintage boats. The customer radius is 350 miles, since the company offers needed support within one day. “We buy our boats globally, but generally sell them locally,” Warner says.

For more information about Mahogany Bay, visit their website at www.mahoganybay.net.



outside the glass-paneled doors leading to a lovely portico, one of Warner’s new additions to the home.

“When you stand right here at the center, you are facing precisely southeast,” says Warner, pointing to the compass markings carved into the portico that also boasts an intimate seating area. He originally discovered the striped awning that covers the portico inside the property’s 60-foot boathouse, another amenity of the historic house that he found very attractive.

History on the Lake

No visit to Stonehedge would be complete without spending a little time learning about its true *raison d’être*. “Legend has it that this home was originally designed to be a speakeasy during Prohibition,” Warner says. “In those days, this was considered pretty far out of town, which made it a perfect place.” Directly behind a rack of coats near the upstairs front door, you’ll notice a buzzer for guests to ring.

Hidden on the other side of a massive sliding wooden door on the floor’s lower level is the speakeasy itself, complete with an impressive buffalo head over the fireplace (original owner Martin Smaby was a game hunter, according to Warner) and a stunning wooden bar.

“The Andrews Sisters used to come down here and sing before they got their big break in 1929,” Warner says. “According to an older woman who used

to live in this neighborhood, their uncle owned the general store in town.”

Filled with comfortable club chairs and a fun collection of memorabilia, the recreation of the unique atmosphere of this hidden room was “something that needed to be done and done right,” Warner says.

The lower level also contains a state-of-the-art kitchen overlooking another patio, as well as a spacious bathroom complete with whirlpool tub and shower. “This is the kitchen I use most often,” he says. “The one upstairs is generally used by caterers when I entertain.”

Inviting guests to experience his unique vintage house is something Warner truly enjoys. “There was no doubt in my mind that this was the home for me,” he says. “It’s definitely a really special, magic place.” **LM**

Julie Pfitzinger is a West St. Paul-based freelance writer.