

HOMEBUILDING TRENDS

# Reclaimed materials add character

Vintage items 'capture the patina' of older homes, builders say

By KATE GOODLOE  
Special Contributor

Allen Nixon of Nixon Custom Homes uses hundred-year-old wood beams reclaimed from Ohio barns in the new Park Cities and Preston Hollow homes he builds.

His houses are known for their European styling, including Mediterranean and French country. Using the old beams in breakfast nooks, family rooms, kitchens and master bedrooms adds to the homes' character, Mr. Nixon said.

"Most people think they want everything new in a new house. But once they see how the old beams look," he said, "then everyone wants old beams. They are so beautiful vs. new wood that doesn't have any imperfections."

Antique doors are also popular in new homes, said Billy Williams, owner of Orr-Reed Wrecking Co., an architectural salvage business in Dallas.

So are leaded windows from old homes and vintage fixtures such as claw-foot bathtubs and



Photos by NATALIE CAUDILL/Staff Photographer

**Builder Randall Underwood** used vintage elements in the Park Cities-area house behind him, which he built three years ago. Above right, a window from an older home is repurposed in a new home.

pedestal sinks.

Builders also use wood taken from houses built in the 1920s as flooring, he said, or for molding and staircase railings.

"The new-home builders are starting to get real receptive," Mr. Williams said.

Custom builders account for about a quarter of the buyers at Oak Cliff Mercantile, which specializes in selling old house parts, said owner Henry Branstetter.

"If they have an unusual



customer or a client who likes older architectural things," he said, builders are particularly interested in reclaimed pieces.

Doors are usually at the top of the list, Mr. Branstetter said, because they can help create an impressive entryway. But plumbing components and other intricate systems are hard to retrofit and are best left unused, he said.

Whether to include such items in a new home "really just boils down to personal preference," said Randall Under-



This antique door went in a bedroom in the house built by Mr. Underwood.

## Popular pieces from the past

- Flooring
- Front doors
- Fireplace mantels
- Ceiling beams
- Decorative bricks
- Pedestal sinks
- Claw-foot tubs
- Leaded and stained glass

Kate Goodloe

wood, a Dallas-based builder who sometimes reuses old doors and windows in new homes.

In a house he built three years ago, Mr. Underwood used an antique leaded glass window to light up a stairwell.

That home also incorporated a reclaimed beveled glass door in the entry hall and a vintage leaded glass window in the back entry.

About half his clients are in-

terested in using antique materials. "Some people want everything to be new again because they've lived in older houses and don't choose to do that again," Mr. Underwood said.

"But a lot of people like to capture the patina of the older house with the convenience of a new house.

"It's a particular client who wants that."

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