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THE DOUBLE CROSS-GABLED BUNGALOW

by ROB SCHWEITZER

As reward for a life of thrift, a woman gained ownership of a piece of land reputed to be in the very center of the United States. It was well worth her time to search far and wide for a beautiful home design for this enviable location. The center of the U.S. – the heart of liberty – was deserving of the best American architecture. To determine the suitable design, hundreds were cast aside. The home that was chosen? A thoroughbred bungalow and an architecture that is truly American – The Aladdin Plaza.

That is the story told in a 1920 advertisement for a Double Cross-Gabled Bungalow. The post-World War I

era saw barnstorming groups performing across the country in air shows, piloting their two-winged craft through fancy maneuvers. A variety of this type of house was given the name Airplane bungalow, with wide-crossing gables that project like wings, and a row of windows on the upper floor, resembling early biplanes of this period. Some of the gables flared up in an oriental fashion, others were sculpted in an Arts and Crafts manner.

The Double Cross- Gabled Bungalow was one of the larger types offered in the teens and Roaring '20s. The home usually had three or four bedrooms, and perhaps a library or breakfast room as well. Some plans, as in the Harris model *M-1512*, also

sported a larger dormer. Overall the plans were complex, with gables and porches running at cross angles all over the building. Porches were usually large, many times wrapping around a corner as on the Aladdin *Plaza*, or containing two porches like the Lewis *La Vitello*.

This was a stunning home filled with visual delights and easily identifiable in many cities and towns across America. Its pleasure is derived from the varied facade views that it presents and the enjoyment of its spacious interiors by its owners.

These were upscale dwellings. The La Vitello contained

beamed ceilings in several rooms, and used the newly introduced French doors for exiting to the pergola-shaded terrace. Windows were generally larger than in other bungalows, or grouped in threes or fours. Exterior surfaces often had combinations of brick, stone, shingles and stucco. "The very essence of American architecture" says the ad extolling the Aladdin's Plaza, "makes up its attractive lines. The West is portrayed in the beautiful California pergola porch, the East in the interior of the home. The sunny South finds credit in the spacious porch, while the North has loaned the shingle sidewalls, representing northern homes in the early days of American history."



ALADDIN PLAZA



LEWIS LA VITELLO

