

# ON THE CUTTING EDGE

BY ROBERT SCHWEITZER

In any community, neighborhood, or block there are trendsetters. They are the first family to have a minivan, the first with a sunroom, or the first to paint their house in historic colors. It is not always the same family that tries these "cutting-edge" innovations, but a certain confidence is needed to attempt such a task. The house pictured here was one such case. This Victorian Queen Anne style home was painted a barn red and was featured on the cover of the local phone directory. The new owners had enough confidence to know that the red color was inappropriate and had specific ideas about the overall "look" they wanted. As you can imagine, they were after a softer, more harmonious effect. They also wanted to highlight the many architectural details of the house without making them jump out at passersby. The house is prominently located on a main street with significant auto and foot traffic.

An overview of the house revealed many hidden design/architectural treasures. Gothic touches in the side windows and some Italianate detailing on the porches were slated to be highlighted by paint. The most dominant features were the Queen Anne side tower, wrap-around porch and the elaborate gable detailing. Such items as a lattice gable screen and bargeboards on the gables

were painted in contrasting colors. This, combined with two shades of a similar body color, helped highlight the horizontal lines in what would otherwise be a very vertical building.

The owners agonized for quite some time over accent colors, and, in the end, chose to use some more modern shades that complemented the historic main body colors in a very effective way. The capability of combining historic and modern color ideas produced a unique product that garnered many comments from the local populace.

The overall effect was very calm but delightful. And, as you might expect, this began a trend in the area of repainting and colorizing the older historic homes, but the trend did not stop with 19th century houses. The town has seen a rebirth in re-coloring early 20th century Georgian Colonials, Dutch Re-

ivals, and Cape Cods. It just take one, you know! **VII**

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