

Fall 2015

roots TO roofs

*a quarterly guide to
Yamhill Valley Homes,
Gardens & Real Estate*

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Maria Wronski hired Cellar Ridge Construction to help her restore the Victorian at 10th and Baker streets. Built in 1896, it was moved to its current location in 1911.

Marcus Larson/News-Register

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Maria Wronski
Owner

PERIOD DETAILS, MODERN COMFORTS

Meticulous makeover restores turn-of-the-century charm to McMinnville Victorian

By **STARLA POINTER**
Of the News-Register

With a century of updates stripped away, the Victorian house at 10th and Baker streets has been lovingly restored to turn-of-the-century glory as a bed-and-breakfast.

Known on McMinnville's historic register as the Frank E. Rogers House, the 2,600-foot structure drips with Queen Anne-style lace and other elaborate touches of the era. Owner Maria Wronski chose the more muted of the two exterior color schemes popular in the 1890s -- pale gray and darker gray with white trim, rather than a riot of bright pinks, yellows and other hues — in order to show off those architectural details. She painted the front door red.

Wronski fell in love with the exterior features, even though many bits and pieces were missing, when she first spotted the house last year. And when she stepped into the foyer and saw a trio of pocket doors leading to the parlor, living room and kitchen, the deal was sealed.

She also was charmed by the original stained

Right: The Victorian is now a B&B, with a more formal sitting room, bedroom and kitchen downstairs and a more relaxed country-style unit upstairs. The owner has been collecting period furniture and decorations for years in preparation for finding the right house.

Marcus Larson/News-Register



glass in many of the windows; tin ceilings circa 1912 in the front parlor and living room; original hardware on many of the doors; and, most of all, the banister, which makes a bold statement in the foyer and sets off the winding stairway with carved ball top newel posts.

Wronski and her husband, Paul, have owned property in the Eola Hills above Amity for 13 years. They moved here full time after building a home that resembles an old-fashioned bungalow.

For years, Wronski also had been looking for an old house to fix up and turn into a bed-and-breakfast. The Victorian was in just the right shape — bad.

“Just what I was looking for,” she said. “It was my dream to redo an old home, to bring it back to its original glory.”

She hired Cellar Ridge Construction to do the heavy work, such as gutting and rebuilding the kitchens, redoing plumbing and electrical systems, and making other improvements, both mechanical and cosmetic.

Work started in November 2014. But by early August, Wronski was bringing in the period furniture and accessories she's been collecting for years. Her B&B, “The Victorian on 10th,” opened this month.

In 1896, Frank E. Rogers spent \$2,500 to build the two-story house on the corner of Sixth and Cowls streets. In 1912, it was moved to its current location, four blocks north and one block west of its original site.

How was the move accomplished? Undoubtedly with rollers under the structure and horses



providing the pulling power, although Wronski has yet to find documents to confirm that.

She's also wondering why it was moved. If anyone knows, she would like to hear about it.

At its current location, with a new basement, the house served as a home for several differ-

Above: The house's original banister and curving staircase were among selling points for Maria Wronski, who loves older homes.

Opposite: Pocket doors, another favorite feature, can separate the sitting room from the parlor and front entrance.

ent families over the years. “Think of all those people!” Wronski marveled.

Coincidentally, one of the resident families was distantly related to John Mead, co-owner of Cellar Ridge. An old photo shows one of Mead’s relatives, then a child, standing with others on a side porch that no longer exists.

The structure also was the headquarters of The Designers, an interior design firm, in the 1980s. Some people still refer to the house by the firm’s name.

By 1989, it was back in service as a home. A couple did some extensive fixing and changing — in fact, that’s happened numerous times in the structure’s history. They also added a gazebo that stood for just a few years on the Baker Street side, but has long since disappeared.

Sometime in the 1990s, that couple or another owner built a carriage house/garage behind the main house. Wronski now rents the smaller building, which faces Baker, to a Salus yoga studio.

In remaking the house into a B&B, Wronski was careful to keep all the details as authentic as possible. “That was part of the fun,” she said.

She didn’t have a choice, anyway. Since the structure is listed on McMinnville’s list of historic buildings, there are strict rules about maintaining its period appearance.

She used vintage materials when she could, or searched out materials that gave the right appearance. For instance, bathrooms feature subway tiles on the shower walls and tiny octagonal tiles on the floor.

As for the missing pieces of gingerbread, she



decided to have those custom made.

“I bought my woodworker husband a lathe,” she said.

The Victorian was entirely carpeted when Wronski found it. Beneath the beige plush wall-to-wall she discovered, in several rooms, wide, Douglas fir planks that were the original flooring. All it took was a lot of polishing to bring them back to their 1890s glory.

In rooms that lacked the beautiful fir, flooring that looks as close to the original as possible was installed.

The B&B has two units that can be rented for the night or the week. In addition, Wronski installed an “owner’s unit” at the back with a bedroom, small parlor, bathroom and kitchen accessible through a separate entrance.

The upstairs unit is reached from the front door via that beautiful banistered staircase. It has a bedroom, bathroom, parlor and kitchen decorated in an informal country Victorian style. Guests can go outside on two small balconies overlooking 10th Street.

Downstairs, guests enter through a large kitchen which opens onto a living room. A cozy bedroom and bathroom complete the first-floor suite. There’s a small outdoor area as well.

In both units, the kitchens are fully equipped with modern appliances. Guests can cook their own meals, if they like, with ingredients Wronski supplies. “I’ll bring a basket with fresh fruit, baked goods, good coffee and stuff from local farms. They can prepare it when they want,” she said.

In the other rooms, the beds are plush and

mounded with pillows. Furniture is a mixture of velvety Victorian pieces and simple modern couches and chairs that look right, but offer more comfort than their period counterparts.

Oriental-style rugs are scattered on the wood floors. Interior walls are painted in comforting tans, pale greens and whites.

Wronski said she had a wonderful time decorating the rooms with furniture and accessories she's been collecting for years. She has haunted thrift and antique stores in search of just the right pieces, including chandeliers and framed art that could have hung on the walls when the house was new.

Shortly before the B&B opened, she showed off the almost-decorated rooms. "Now I'm picking out curtains," she said, saying she was going for heavy fabrics that would look appropriate and screen out traffic noise from nearby Baker Street.

In addition, she was planning the landscaping for the 10th Street and Baker Street sides.

And she was looking forward to meeting her first lodgers. Would they be wine tourists, or visitors here to try some of the area's great restaurants? Would they have their pets with them?

"I travel with my dogs, and it's sometimes hard to find a place for them," Wronski said. "My B&B will be dog-friendly."

Opposite: The downstairs bedroom features original stained glass in the windows, as well as period furniture with modern comfort.

Right: The upstairs unit, like the one downstairs, features a full kitchen.

Marcus Larson/News-Register

