# House of Windsor

When Windsor chairmaker Peter Galbert and his wife, Sue, first entered the old house for sale in Sterling, Mass., they experienced déjà vu. The layout was identical to their last house, which Peter built in upstate New York. Then, as Peter climbed up to the attic, where the hand-hewn chestnut timberframe was exposed, he heard the owners telling Sue that the house had been built in 1801—by a Windsor chairmaker. The chair shop, they said, had stood across the road until it collapsed in the 1950s, and its weathered siding now paneled the walls of the carriage house (which Peter had already sized up as a great little shop). Soon after moving in, Peter discovered that it wasn't just the house that had a history of chairmaking. In the early 1800s, the small town of Sterling ranked as one of the state's leading producers of seating. In 1820 alone, its 23 chair shops cranked out some 70,000 Windsors. Welcome home, Peter. Better get to work.

—*Jonathan Binzen*

***Chairmaking legacy.*** *In the early 1800s, Newton Burpee built Windsor chairs (right) in his water-powered shop (above) in Sterling, Mass.*

***Old house, new Windsors.*** *Peter Galbert lives in the house Burpee built in 1801 (right), and builds chairs like this settee (left) in the attached carriage house.*

Photos, except where noted: Jonathan Binzen; left: Dana Duke

**How They Did It** Galbert makes innovative tools, too. Turn to p. 90 to see some of them.

**Audio Slide Show** Galbert gives a guided tour of his shop and his chairs at FineWoodworking.com/extras.

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