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Halloween

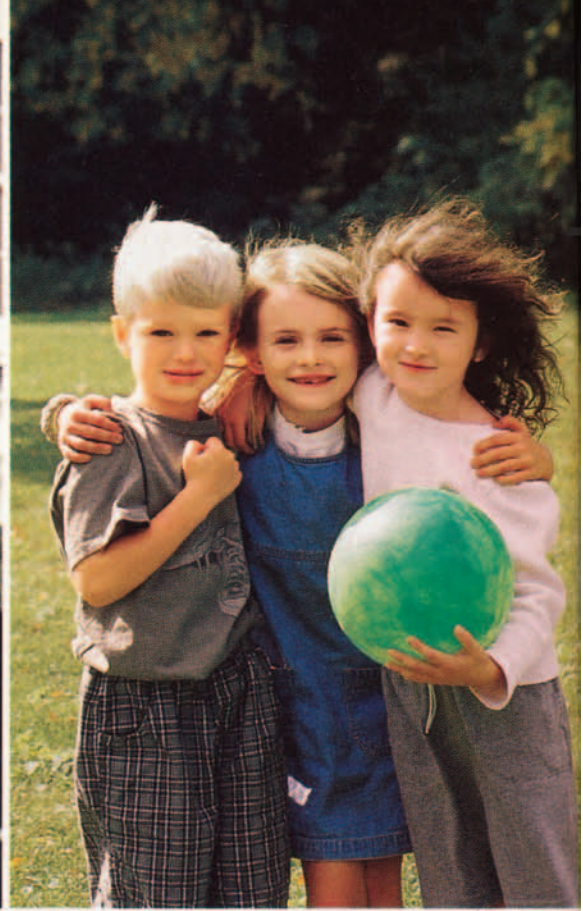
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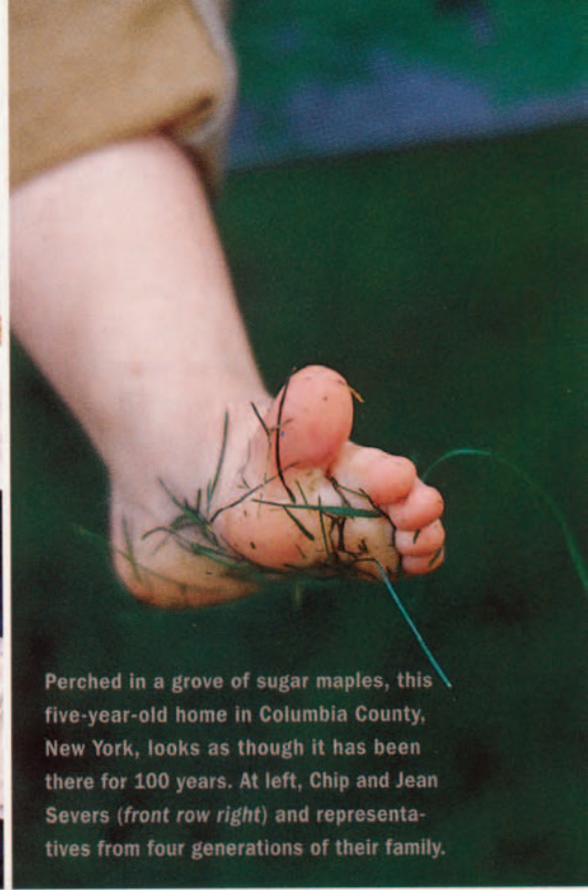
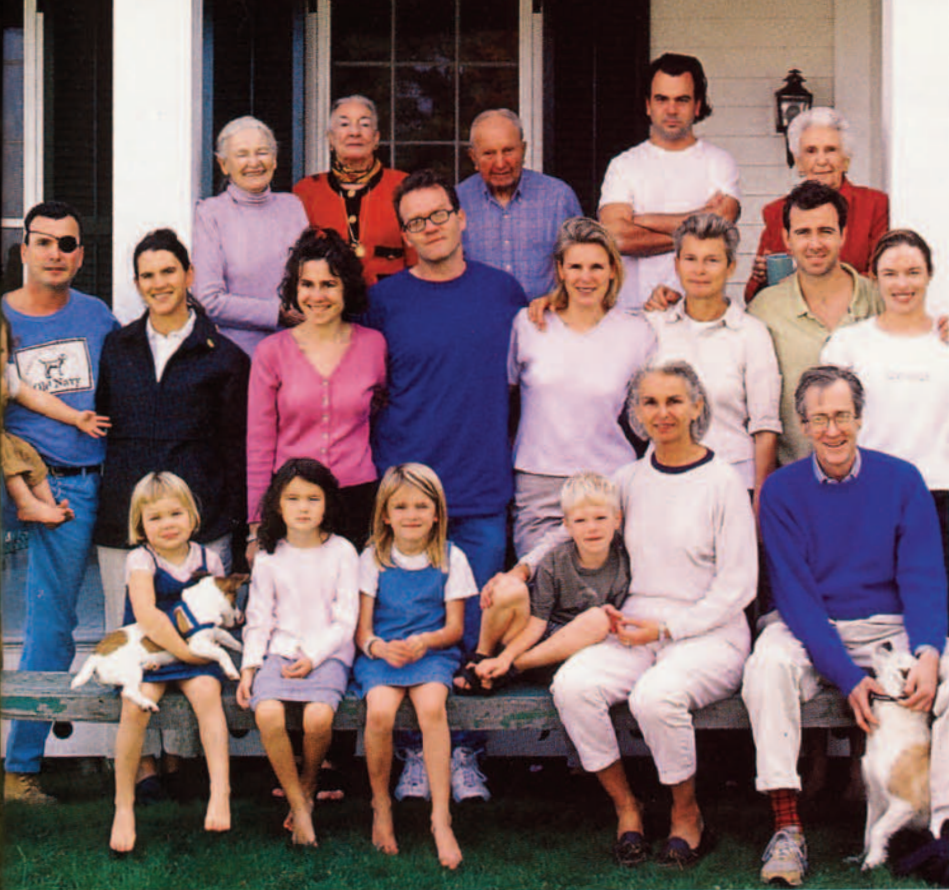
The Perfect Autumn Picnic



RESTORING

When their country retreat burned to the ground, a family raised it back up, better than ever





Perched in a grove of sugar maples, this five-year-old home in Columbia County, New York, looks as though it has been there for 100 years. At left, Chip and Jean Severs (front row right) and representatives from four generations of their family.

MEMORIES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHUCK BAKER

PRODUCED BY MARTHA BAKER



When their weekend home, an 1810 farmhouse filled with heirlooms and antiques, burned to the ground six years ago, Chip and Jean Severs refused to be defeated by their loss. Instead they turned misfortune into an opportunity to improve on a house and a lifestyle they had grown to love. From a collection of photographs, architect Kate Johns and builder Steve Anderson were able to replicate the Federal-period farmhouse, incorporating details like plaster walls, restoration glass windows, raised panel doors, and a cache of old pine boards. Rather than build on the original site, which sat only a stone's throw off the road, Chip and Jean moved the new house to a more private location. "It's peaceful here," says Jean. "We can observe wildlife from the kitchen window." Antiques aficionados, they hit their old haunts in the nearby town of Hudson, N.Y., as well as local auctions, to furnish the house. With four children of their own and parents living close by, they looked for practical 18th- and 19th-century pieces with surfaces that would only be enhanced by wear. "We're always moving tables out to the lawn or squeezing an extra person around the table," Jean says, "so we looked for pieces that would accommodate a surge of guests or the intimacy of two."





TODAY'S COUNTRY LIFESTYLE MAKES ROOM FOR THE ENTIRE FAMILY— WHETHER AN INTIMATE TWO OR 22.

Opposite page: Partial to old green painted finishes, Chip and Jean seek pieces with interesting silhouettes, like that of this rocking chair. "It's a piece of folk art," says Jean of its haphazard construction and tombstone-shaped back, "and also deceptively comfortable." This page, left: Bare floors show off the kitchen table's turned legs and the clean lines of the celadon-tinged stepladder. Below: Chip and Jean loved the pumpkin-colored walls, gray-green trim, and gilded accents of their old living room, so they went with a similar combination in the new one, painting the walls several shades lighter. BELOW: LOVE SEATS: ETHAN ALLEN. FOR RESOURCES, SEE ADDRESS INDEX.







The fire destroyed a family treasure, a long table etched with Jean's siblings' initials. Anxious to find another table that would seat her entire family, she purchased this early-19th-century European farm table before the new house was even finished. "We fell in love with the black walnut," she says. As the eldest of eight children, Jean knows that a large family can never have too many chairs, so she quickly assembled a collection of Hitchcocks. Long benches, like the one under the dining-room sideboard, number among her favorites because "you can squeeze more people to a table." The lighter shade of the living-room walls keeps the visual transition to the dining room from being cumbersome. The ceiling is a pale version of the trim to avoid one of her personal pet peeves: large expanses of white.

This photograph: Flush with natural light, a landing houses an extra bed for daydreaming or overnight guests. Jean likes the delicate designs of the painted iron frame; the life-size ceramic dalmatian was Chip's whimsical addition. *Opposite page, top:* Soft notes of symmetry resound throughout the house. The 18th-century maple headboards give a dormered bedroom a sense of grandeur. "We loved the quirkiness of the short canopies," Jean says. *Opposite page, bottom:* While the freestanding tub with English fixtures has romantic overtones, it has become more a recovery room for muddied and tired grandchildren and nieces and nephews after a long day of play. The couple prefers the natural look of stripped wainscoting, flecked with remnants of yellow and white paint, just as they appreciate the variations in the salvaged pine floorboards.



