



Front Porch Revival

With a fine arts degree and a background in architectural photography, Cincinnati contractor Greg Matulionis was convinced not only that the porch columns on this painted—but faded—1880's Victorian lady were worth saving, but also that it could also be done cost-effectively.

Each of the unique columns had originally been turned and hand-carved from a single poplar log, and most of the rot was concentrated down low where they were more exposed to weather. After cutting out the damage and patching as needed with PT lumber and two-part epoxy, Matulionis rebuilt them—though each column required 65 pieces of new trim to match the original look. The railings were too far gone to save, but proved to be useful as templates as he re-created the balustrade using redwood for the rails and well-dried PT for the balusters, which he turned in his shop.

To make painting the intricate color scheme easier, Matulionis pre-finished most of the components prior to re-

installation. While he used a spray gun to paint the rails, he painted the balusters by hand, mounting them on his “baluster turner,” a motor-driven unit of his own design that allowed him to rotate them while quickly brushing on even coats of paint. He supersized the unit for the columns but replaced the motor with a crank, so that it operated like a hand-driven rotisserie. A helper slowly turned each column while Matulionis applied the multiple painted rings needed to create the design, no taping required. It wasn't quite so easy at the tops of the columns, where a two-color floral pattern required more tedious handwork.

Before installing new T&G fir flooring and reinstalling the columns and balustrade, Matulionis sealed each board on all six sides with Sherwin-Williams Deckscapes stain. Later, he finished the flooring with three coats of spar urethane. A series of eight low-voltage LED lights illuminates the porch when it's time to step out at night. —*Andrew Wormer* ♦

PHOTOS: GREG MATULIONIS