



# Tradition

By: Mel Shakespeare



**T**here is a timeless truth that is as relevant today as ever. And that is tradition. To speak of tradition is to speak of an immutable principle and an application that transcends this moment by its having been a primary precedent of conscientious men. Tradition not as custom or habit, nor even as the transient style of a passing age, but tradition as the guiding principle by which men carry continuity of their most essential and useful forms with them. This presiding idea animates society, determines what man makes, how he makes it and fashions life

to the point of art if he is steadfast in his principle and remains cognizant of his spiritual self. By doing so, he surrounds himself with forms that echo transcendent archetypes using fundamentals not founded by his forebears but maintained by them. This is the window to his soul and the cornerstone whereon his love is laid.

"Every beauty and greatness in this world is created by a single thought or emotion inside a man. Everything we see today, made by past generations, was, before its appearance, a thought in the mind of a man or an impulse in the heart of a woman." KAHIL GIBRAN

And it is the products of these thoughts that have inspired us, and continue to inspire us, that have become valued form, that help us align and create our present, that allow a spiritualizing of the emotions subtle and refined, that let immortal beauty into the eyes of mortal men.

In these days of cold facts, commercialism and expensive frontages, one feels that art is being shoved into the discard, and when a good building is demolished to make room for an "ultra-modern" duplex or coffee shop, one knows that the Goddess of Beauty is getting an awfully raw deal. ➤

If what is being built today in the name of architecture is mere construction and ceases to relate to the soil it stands upon, where are we to look for inspiration? So much of the arts of man has become mere decoration, has lost sight of art's first function, having been sacrificed in the name of abstraction. In the multi-media world of advertising and hype, significant traditions suffer from technological application and denominators common to man's lower nature. Predominant today the industrialization of buildings provides little more than boring skylines wherein we may safely

suppose, a modern man works too hard at life, somewhat cutoff and segregated from his more natural, contented self. A more natural ambition would be to express himself with the beauty that is his birthright.

The advent of these times seldom brings more skill, and often less, to this matter. Where once craftsmen specialized and maintained a high degree of excellence, work now lacks the stamp of good training and the soundness of careful, deliberate application. It was the persistence in fundamentals, instilled and instigated by the apprentice system, that prepared

the craftsman to do good work. To this day there is still no better lesson than years of service in the presence of the master who readily imparts his craft and secrets to the novice willing to learn the blend of beam, panel and furniture to give a room character and distinction.

Sometimes we are fortunate to see the genius of the architect and the skill of the craftsman who executed a work at their best. Spaces well conceived, but with little of consequence contained therein are devoid of feeling, uninviting and spiritless. If the same pride of craftsmanship and care has

fashioned the furniture as has fashioned the structure that contains them, harmony is immediately evident and a no more welcome threshold may be imagined.

**Mel Shakespeare** has well over 35 years of experience in the relocation of historic homes that would otherwise be fodder for the wrecking ball. His business, Tradition Home, has fostered his great passion for traditional styles and methods and we welcome his talents and expertise as a regular columnist with Edifice. [www.traditionhome.com](http://www.traditionhome.com)

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