





There is joy in work. There is no happiness except in the realization that we have accomplished something. —Henry Ford

Joy Ride

A Greenwich addition emulates a converted New England barn and shelters a valuable car collection



EARLY INDUSTRIALIST Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company and author of the famous Model T automobile, was a true believer in human potential. He built something great from nothing, and encouraged all men to do the same. Ford likely would have been an admirer of architect Louis Contadino of Cos Cob, and of the barn-like addition he built on a Greenwich home in 2006.

Seeking a place to house a collection of valuable cars and car parts—including several Ford inventions—the owner of the Georgian Colonial called upon Contadino

in 2002, and the architect began design on a brand-new addition meant to replicate a converted 19th century barn. As the plan for the structure grew to 5,000 sq ft, it was decided that the building would also provide a family party space, with guest bedrooms and bathrooms, and act as a pool cabana.

As Contadino worked, he consulted closely with his clients, ever present to their wishes. He examined paintings of old barns, particularly those by American landscape artist Eric Sloane. He focused on how to make the transition from the main house—a white-clapboard Colo-



Eric Sloane paintings served as inspiration

ABOVE Addition done in stone, board and batten, with slightly stained siding lends an antique feel.

RIGHT A lovely pool sprawls alongside the addition, and cabana facilities exist within the structure.

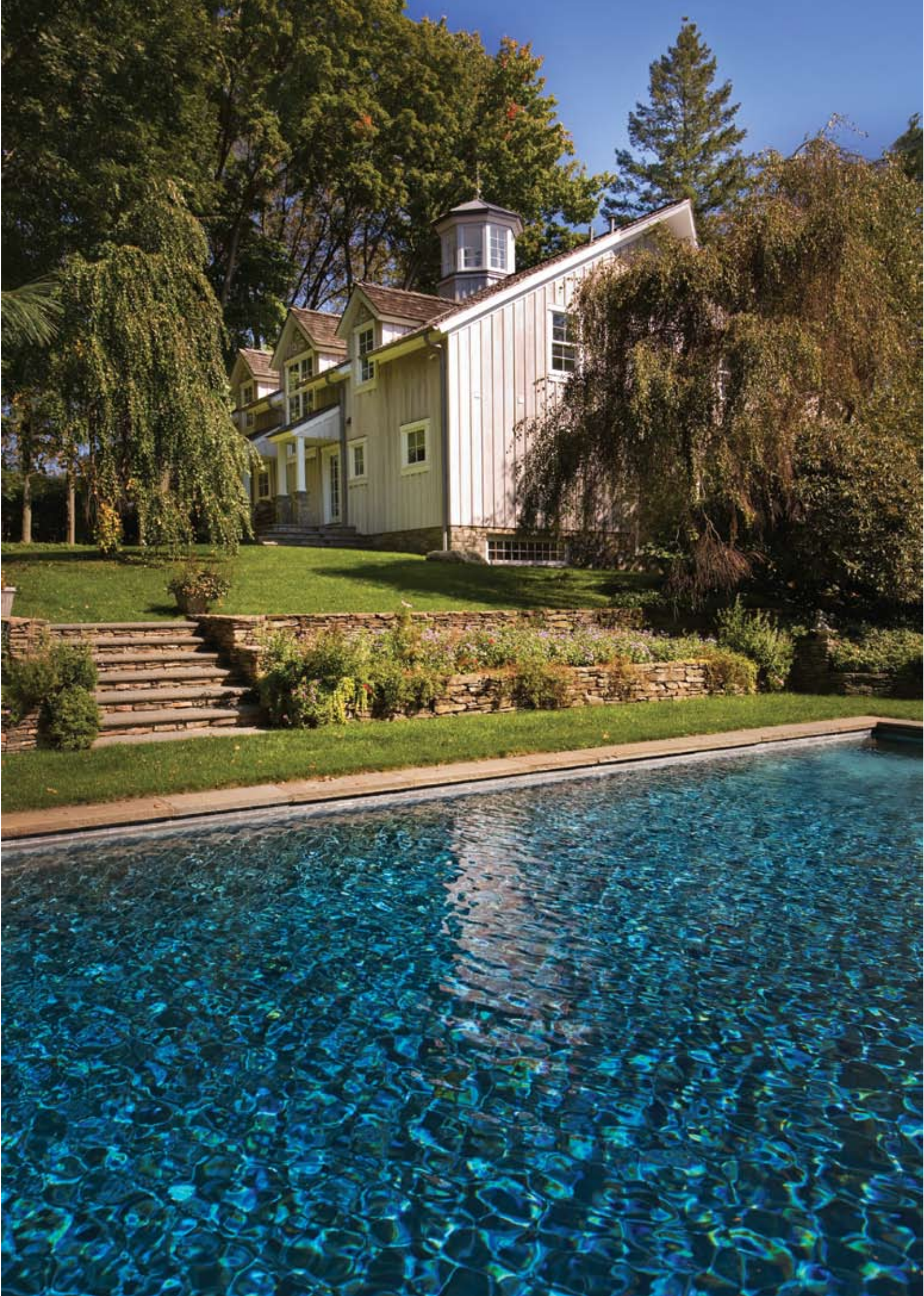
nial of 9,000 sq ft—to the addition—done in stone, board and batten, with slightly stained siding—as unassuming and complementary as possible.

“The most challenging part of working on this project was designing a barn that would complement the existing architecture,” says Contadino. “We didn’t want a big bulky box. Positioning it so that we could save as many trees as possible was also a challenge. It is in a wooded area, and the owners wanted to keep the trees in place.”

The owners were thrilled with the work, which took four years from start to finish. They speak well of Contadino: “He is a talented architect, one who can work with an owner with strong ideas. He is very good with details and thorny construction issues. He was always prompt with deadlines and very

professional. We enjoyed working with him and recommend him highly.”

Contadino’s creation is indeed handsome, with its details reminiscent of an old New England barn. Where big doors might have opened into a barn, over-sized windows stand in their imaginary place. Cupolas with glass, which would have provided light in a barn before times of electricity, rise here as if left to foster authentic feel after a renovation. Small black squares on peaks of dormers mimic Martin holes, devices in traditional barns that allowed birds to come inside to eat the worms and insects that fed on hay. They are even blocked off as real ones would have been during a genuine conversion. The connector from the house proper to the addition is all stone, as if it were outside at one time and a wall had





Confadino worked to make the transition from house to barn as flawless as possible. Stone steps and walls match the stone of the Georgian Colonial's chimney.





Rusticity and sleekness exist side by side

ABOVE A 1934 coupe, 1932 Ford, and drag-race car by Don Waite sit side by side in the garage.

RIGHT Natural light floods into every space, highlighting valuable cars and car parts, as well as cozy, colorful decoration.

been layered on top of the stone to make it a natural transition or infill between the two buildings. Bedrooms on a second-floor loft of the new building feature sliding doors, with small glass panes and exposed tracks.

As far as the decoration within, rusticity is set in contrast to sleekness. In the main gathering room—where over-sized windows suggesting original barn doors let in ample light—a pool table, piano and comfy furniture exist beside shelves of rare performance parts used by 1940s hot-rodders and a 1932 Ford Model B 4-cylinder engine, with a Fargo four-port overhead valve conversion. The lighting fixture above the pool table is chrome-like in appearance.

Another engine is displayed on a landing beside a computer area on a pedestal of fire-engine red. It is a 1948 Ford Flathead V8 engine, with special perfor-

mance parts made by Thickstun in the 1940s during the heyday of hot-rodding. The parts include finned head covers and a finned air-cleaner cover.

A three-door garage houses the owner's impressive car collection. An original 1934 three-window coupe—hot-rodded with a 430 hp 1970s-design GM engine, racing disc brakes and transmission—has a Jaguar XKE rear end. Hot-rodded in the 1960s, a 1932 Ford five-window coupe boasts baby-blue pleated leather upholstery and a 1966 Corvette motor. An orange drag-race car with a 1,100 hp motor was built by the famous racer Don Waite in the 1970s. He raced the car successfully into the 1980s. The “Red 797 Car” was also built by Don Waite and raced in the 1990s. It has a 1,700 hp Pontiac motor that burns nitro methane. The car could reach a speed of almost







200 mph in a standing quarter-mile race.

So it is that the rare is sheltered within the new meant to emulate the renovated old. Contadino is pleased with his multi-layered creation. “It does everything architecturally that we wanted it to do,” he says. “And my favorite part was that the clients were really happy.”

With such sentiment, Contadino might have made Henry Ford smile. In his diligent work, he experienced the only joy that Ford acknowledged: that which comes from accomplishment. Louis Contadino of Cos Cob did more than build an addition. He created joy for himself and his clients. ■

RESOURCES

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LEFT A lighting fixture above the pool table in the main gathering room is chrome-like in appearance.

ABOVE Left, a 1948 Ford Flathead V8 engine idles on a red pedestal. At right, rare performance car parts on shelves maintain theme in the main gathering room.