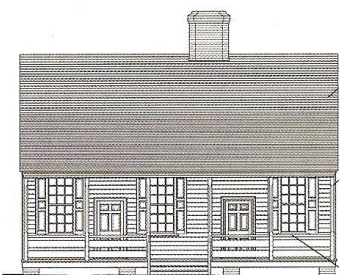


New & Noteworthy

TIME TRAVEL

This Old Coffeehouse

It's easy to get sidetracked by the actors in period costumes and elaborate performances at Virginia's **Colonial Williamsburg** and forget just how seriously the 84-year-old foundation takes architectural accuracy. Recently, the group debuted its latest testament to studied authenticity: a re-creation of R. Charlton's Coffeehouse, a seemingly simple 18th-century structure that took 14 years and \$3.3 million to build again. **BY CHRIS OPFER**



Roof The reconstructed roof is based on portions of the original truss along with 13,000 handmade shingles split by hatchet. Builders laid the wide, tulip poplar boards horizontally in the traditional manner.

Framing The new frame is made from hand-sawn, local poplar wood, as was the original. Builders also used an 18th-century process to raise the frame, first lifting each portion by hand, then using a pulley system to hoist it into place (cadets from the Virginia Military Institute helped). Williamsburg's James Anderson Blacksmith Shop handcrafted each of the 28,000 nails, as well as the hinges and locks.

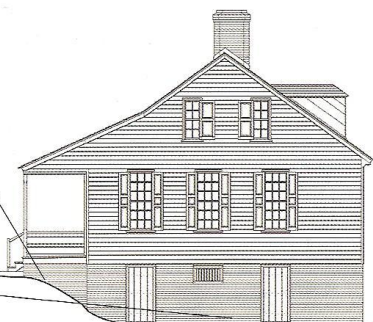
Porch Archaeologists determined the porch's initial dimensions through a 13-year site excavation. Digging by hand, they uncovered the porch's brick footings. They also found a hardened mass of ash and runoff that had been swept off the porch some 300 years ago, giving them an idea of the porch's footprint.

Interior walls The wood walls are covered with a plaster made of oyster shells from the Chesapeake Bay. The shells were melted, liquefied, and left to sit for six months to form a gray lime putty, which was then blended with sand, brick clay, and horse hair.

Floors Woodworkers cut longleaf southern yellow pine floor planks using an old-fashioned, painstaking pit-saw method: Two people—one standing atop the plank and the other stationed in a pit below—sawed logs lengthwise into 1-inch-thick boards.

Foundation Two of the brick walls are from the original structure; the others were crafted from thousands of recycled 19th-century bricks. Masons created an additional 6,000 bricks of local clay and sand, which were sun dried and fired in a nearby kiln.

Cellar Archaeologists uncovered more than 30,000 animal bones, which suggest the coffeehouse's menu included such fare as shellfish, lamb, and peacock. The remade Charlton's does not serve food, but visitors can taste coffee and tea imported from the West Indies, just like what was served in the 18th century.



DATEBOOK

March 12–23 Melbourne Food & Wine Festival Melbourne Chefs, winemakers, and foodies converge for some 250 events, including demonstrations by chefs such as Brazil's Alex Atala, New York City's April Bloomfield, Italy's Massimo Bottura, and Aussie favorite Neil Perry. Visitors can also opt for hands-on activities, including pig butchering, whiskey distilling, and grape picking. melbournefoodandwine.com.au

March 13–14 and 20–21 The Highland Maple Festival Monterey, Virginia Remote, mountainous Highland County, known as "Virginia's Switzerland," is the United States' southernmost producer of maple syrup. Every year about 70,000 visitors descend on the town of Monterey (pop. 144) to observe the process and enjoy the tasty end product via pancake breakfasts and freshly made doughnuts. virginia.org



March 24–28 Tennessee Williams/New Orleans Literary Festival New Orleans Every year this fete draws the cultural cognoscenti to the former stomping grounds of Tennessee Williams, above. This year's guests include playwright John Patrick Shanley, writers Dave Eggers and Michael Lewis, and *The Wire*'s creator, David Simon. *The Night of the Iguana* will be the featured play. tennesseewilliams.net

PLAN AHEAD MEMORIAL DAY IN

EUROPE In late May, before summer's tourist crush, spend a long weekend in Europe, enjoying the tulips of Amsterdam or a warm breeze off the Seine. shermanstravel.com/travel_guides/europe

CRUISE NEWS

Crystal Cruises is offering two-for-one pricing on all 2010 voyages and, for most trips, free round-trip airfare. Azamara Cruises, a 2009 Smart Luxury Award Winner, is relaunching as **Azamara Club Cruises** with more all-inclusive pricing, longer port calls, and higher rates. **The Yachts of Seabourn** is shearing up to 65 percent off the cost of all its European and Asian cruises this year.