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Halaby Restoration and Painting – Old World View of Pride in One's Work.

Three Generations of Artisans

—the Fine Art of Custom Painting

by Barbara Meigs Taylor, photography by Aidin Mariscal

Have you ever thought of house painting as an art form?

Marc Halaby, principal of Halaby Restoration and Painting, not only views it that way but also approaches the work performed for each of his clients as true art. "A lot of guys can paint a house," says Halaby, "but we depend on our knowledge and experience, and most of all, we recognize the value of excellent customer service."

Though some of our clients are still using faux finishes, Halaby says that what is popular today is the use of Venetian plaster, some *trompe l'oeil*, in addition to fine-wood finishing, gilding and for some of our clients, automotive finishes. Explaining the latter, Halaby, has just completed work for a West Los Angeles residence where kitchen cabinets and interior doors were finished with Mercedes Benz metallic silver, clear-coated and polished, just like a car.

Marc explains that Venetian plaster contains actual marble dust that highlights and adds shimmer to walls. It can be applied in a rough trowel fashion called Tuscany or Veneciano, a smoothed and burnished application. It actually looks like stone or marble.

Cornerstone for the work ethic and standards set by Halaby for himself and his team of some 30 craftsmen comes from the Old World view of pride in one's work. To work for him, you have to love what you do. Halaby follows in the footsteps of three generations of his family, bringing to the workplace the total of experience not only of his father, but also that of his grandfather who first touched the shores of America in 1920.

Halaby says of his grandfather, "He came here from Syria because, like today, America is still the place where people want to live and prosper. He and



San Juan House: General contractor: Jeff L. Madison



House in Laguna Beach:
General contractor: David Wojtaszek





Above: House in Newport: General Contractor: Duane Fitzgerald

Right: Details of plugs over granite.
General contractor: Duane Fitzgerald



House in Newport:
General Contractor: Duane Fitzgerald



his wife settled in Brooklyn where they remained throughout their lives. "Those were the days of exceedingly personalized business signage – the time when signs were gilded with gold leaf and often reflected the vocation of the business, be it a cobbler, milliner, pharmacist, dentist, doctor, harness-maker or grocery store. In some cases, the artwork executed by the elder Mr. Halaby used family crests and coat of arms.

In 1947, Marc's father moved to the San Fernando Valley and opened the family's painting and restoration business in Chatsworth. It was here that Marc Halaby was born 40 years ago. During his youth he learned the skills of his father and grandfather. Not only did his father do custom wood finishes, he also worked on many museum pieces, fine paintings, porcelain pieces and antique furniture. This is where Marc believes he became so critical of detail, and he demands the same from his employees. The father of two children, Halaby is hopeful that his young son will carry on the pride and tradition of the family business.

Following his father's death 10 years ago, Halaby Restoration and Painting was moved to Orange County. Today, working with custom homebuilders, including Jeff Madison, McKeehan Construction, Robert McCarthy and Richard Crawford among others, Halaby is kept busy. In addition to custom-home owners who directly seek his services, Halaby also works with architects and designers such as Brion Jeannette, Mark Singer, Chris Light and many others. He is especially excited about an upcoming project in Newport Beach working with Ed Lohrbach, a

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longtime, well-respected architect of this area. The project is a contemporary estate on the beach being built by Jeff Madison, builder of the home featured on the cover of this issue of *H Magazine*.

"Ninety percent of our work is newly constructed custom homes," Halaby says. In addition, he has a full service shop, equipped with spray booths and specialized equipment for those builders who require cabinetry and millwork that must be pre-finished before installation. "Wood finishing is a major aspect of our company. That is where we really excel - executing stain-grade wood finishes on architectural millwork with the ability to make things look like fine furniture. This must come from my furniture background," he states.

He attributes the great success of his business to word-of-mouth referrals and great service, plus the fact that each of his team of 30-plus employees is like a family member. He seeks perfection, and in doing so, reminds each one of his team members that quality is the most important part of his reputation as a painting contractor in this community.

Some of the firm's work may be viewed on its website, which at present is a work in progress: www.halabyrestoration.com, or email: halabypaint@sbcglobal.net. For information call (949) 650-8194. ■



House in San Clemente
General Contractor: McKeehan Construction
Interior Design: RG www.raadg.com

Below: Details of plugs over wood grain.
General contractor: Duane Fitzgerald



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