



In one of Piedmont's earliest Victorians, designer Stephen Shubel has revived an old idea — comfort.



BY ZAHID SARDAR

OLD

Gold



"I have never really loved Victorian houses," says Sharon Gillin, who moved into one of the oldest houses in Piedmont with her husband Andrew nearly six years ago. The beautifully-detailed, two-story Victorian they chose was designed by architect Charles Eastlake in the 1880s, long before her grandfather, Frederick M. Gilberd arrived from New Zealand in the 1880s. "I grew up here and so did my parents," Gillin says, as if to explain why they chose a house they didn't really want. Not only was it the wrong style of house on the outside, but it had been freshly remodeled inside with unsympathetic Spartan white corian and ugly woodwork.

What it had going for it was its manageable size, its secure neighborhood and a floor plan and rooms that opened well to light and air.

"We bit the bullet and tore up this brand new stuff... it was such a moral hurdle," says Gillin, a psychotherapist by training. Cast concrete counters, textured like river rocks, by Philip Baird replaced the characterless corian, and eventually white denim was ordered for the windows to soften the look. "My goal was to make every room comfortable," she says.

It became clear after they started the remodeling that to make the rooms mesh together and to combine Gillin's eclectic collection of

PHOTOS BY DAVID LIVINGSTON

The fireplace hearth is decorated with heirloom china bowls, which broke accidentally during remodeling, left. Tea towels cover chair backs. Golden yellow walls with shutters painted white light up the living room, right. Comfortable old-fashioned chairs contrast with a lively chandelier designed by Jim Misner above the dining table.

