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John Leguizamo's Walls May Talk, but They Don't Criticize

What I Love

By JOANNE KAUFMAN JUNE 17, 2016



Alex Welsh for The New York Times

He diligently studied coffee table books to get a sense of how houses of the period looked — “I wanted to respect the history,” he said — and because the property next door was a twin of his new acquisition, he went knocking. “The owner, this lovely British lady, was so kind and let us walk through every room and take photographs, and we were able to use them to restore our own house,” Mr. Leguizamo said. “It was archaeological, almost.”

Back at his place, chunks of molding were broken, railings and balusters from the once-elegant mahogany stairway had gone missing, and rooms had been haphazardly divided. Mr. Leguizamo, an impassioned student of the “[The Franklin Report](#),” a directory of contractors, architects and other specialists, used it to assemble his dream team of artisans.

“I’m from Queens, baby, so you know I’m a negotiator,” he said. “I’m going to praise everyone for their great work. I’m going to say: ‘I love what you do; you’re a master craftsman. Can you do it for half the price?’ ”