

WHAT A PANE

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If you have remarkable old windows and dread having them replaced, here's a spot of good news: You may not have to.

By *Ray Routhier* rrouthier@mainetoday.com
Staff Writer

Marc Bagala has spent the last 20 years trying to convince homeowners that old windows are worth saving.

Bagala, owner of Bagala Window Works in Falmouth, specializes in restoring historic windows that are generally 80 years old or older. We're talking the ones with the wavy glass.

Over the years, especially recently, Bagala has seen a lot more demand for window restoration as owners of older homes come to realize how much value -- both aesthetically and monetarily -- keeping the original windows can add. And if done right, a restored window can be just as energy-efficient as a new one, Bagala says.

Plus, people are beginning to realize that replacement windows don't last forever either, so restoring a window once might be preferable to replacing it twice.

"For people who are house-proud, putting new windows on an old house is kind of like putting mag wheels on a Model T. It's not an antique anymore," said Bagala. "If restored properly, an old window should have as much energy effi-



Marc Bagala of Bagala Window Works in his Falmouth workshop.

Gregory Rec/Staff Photographer



ciency and last a long time."

In terms of cost, restoring windows can be more expensive than buying the least expensive replacement windows. Bagala says he can weath-erstrip an old window -- add interlocking metal strips to help keep air out -- for about \$300 to \$400 a window, which is about the cost of low-end replacement windows.

But if an old window is in rough shape and he has to take it apart, stabilize it and reglaze the glass, the cost might be \$1,000 or more per win-dow. That's about the cost of some higher-end replacement windows.

To help people learn more about restoring old windows, Bagala has teamed up with Greater Portland Landmarks for a series of workshops.

Bagala and a team of trainees will be restoring windows this year at the 1858 Safford House on High Street in Portland, which houses the offices for Greater Portland Landmarks.

During the renovation, there will be a series of four-hour workshops where members of the public can watch the work being done, have it explained by Bagala, and ask ques-tions.

At various points, people will get a little hands-on experience by trying the work them-selves. The workshops cost \$60 each.

Two of the workshops will be held at Bagala's workshop, where he will strip the wood from the windows and stabilize it. He will refit the wood with wood glue, make repairs and generally tighten the windows. He will also re-glaze the windows to make them stand up to weather.

Navid Ahadzadeh cleans a window at Bagala Window Works in Falmouth. Owner Marc Bagala will conduct a series of window restoration workshops beginning in February. Below: Frames being restored at Bagala Window Works.

Gregory Rec/Staff Photographer

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WINDOW SCHOOL

GREATER PORTLAND LANDMARKS and Marc Bagala of Bagala Window Works in Falmouth are putting on a series of historic window renovation workshops in the coming weeks. People attending the workshops will watch and help Bagala and others restore windows at the 1858 Safford House on High Street in Portland, which houses the offices of Greater Portland Landmarks. The workshop sessions will be held from 12:30 to 4:30 p.m. on Feb. 9, Feb. 23, March 16, April 6 and April 20.

SOME OF THE workshops will be held at Bagala's workshop on Gray Road in Falmouth, while the others will be at the Safford House. The cost is \$60 for each workshop (\$50 for GPL members).

FOR MORE INFORMATION, go to portlandlandmarks.org or call 774-5561.

At one workshop at Safford House, attendees will see a window taken apart and hear about what parts need to be replaced to make the window work properly. They will also learn about lead paint safety.

In addition, there will be a talk during two of the workshops about the history of windows, given by a GPL staff member.

At two other Safford House workshops, windows will be installed and workers will put in the interlocking metal strips for weather-proofing.

There will also be times for question-and-answer sessions.

"We thought that there is a great opportunity for us to use the preservation of our building as a teaching tool for the public," said Hilary Bassett, executive director of Greater Portland Landmarks.

"Windows are one of the strongest character-defining features of older buildings."

Staff Writer Ray Routhier can be contacted at 791-6454 or at:

rrouthier@pressherald.com