

Merchant's House Museum

Newsletter

Fall 2000



On Saturday, October 7, the Merchant's House will host its 4th annual New York City Oyster Festival from noon to 9 p.m.,

When we learned from Those Who Know Such Things that last year more than 35,000 people came to Fourth Street to join in the celebration, we knew it was time to expand. So this year we are taking the festivities around the corner onto Lafayette Street, too.

As Festival-goers savor their oysters and down their Guinness (or water, wine, or Snapple), live music will fill the air.

The day will begin with the sound of pipes as a parade with marchers in full regalia wends its way through the streets of NoHo to the main stage at Lafayette and Fourth Streets.

The sassy, singing diva Peggy Cone and her seven-piece band, the Central Park Stompers, will open the Festival with jumpin' and jivin' music. The line up continues all day with traditional Irish music and name bands, to be interrupted only by the NYC Oyster Shucking Competition when participants from New York City's hottest restaurants don their chef's coats and shuck their hearts out.

And none of this could happen without plenty of help from our friends. We are very grateful to our Title Sponsor, Guinness Bass Import Company, and Lead Sponsors Fleet Bank, Gotham Seafood, Wines of Rias Baixas, Spain,

Architecture Exhibition Opens October 26

Minard Lafever and His Circle: The Diffusion of Grecian Architecture in the United States, 1830-1860

A major architectural exhibition, *Minard Lafever and His Circle: The Diffusion of Grecian Architecture in the United States, 1830-1860*, will open at the Merchant's House on October 26 and run through December 11.

The exhibition will demonstrate how a circle of New York architects, influenced by Minard Lafever, accounted for the widespread dissemination of the Grecian style, with its precedents in Athens, to the South and the Midwest of the United States. The exhibition is curated by Professor Thomas Gordon Smith of the University of Notre Dame.

Dominating the parlors of the Merchant's House, itself an outstanding example of the period, will be two large wooden models of midwestern houses: the Joseph Swift house, built near Cleveland between 1840-42 and attributed to Lafever, and the Micah Porter house, a Michigan farm house built around 1840, based on plates from Lafever's 1833 publication, *The Modern Builder's Guide*. Rare books, photographs, and measured architectural drawings will also be on display.

A two-day colloquium in connection with the exhibition will be held on the weekend of October 28 and 29, featuring lectures on Saturday by noted experts including Professor Smith and David Watkin of the University of Cambridge.

On Sunday, workshops on various aspects of Grecian architecture such as scagliola finish, decorative plasterwork, hand-blocked wallpaper, and architectural moldings will take place.

Tours of Minard Lafever churches, Greek Revival townhouses, Sailors Snug Harbor, and private collections of Federal and mid-19th century furniture and decorative arts will also be offered. For a brochure describing the Colloquium in detail and a registration form, please call The Institute of Classical Architecture at (917) 237-1208. The Merchant's House is open 1-5 p.m., Thursday-Monday.

Wines of New Zealand, Cava Sparkling Wine from Spain, Triarc Company (the maker of Snapple Beverages), New York Press, Beehive Beer and Distributing Company, City Guide magazine, and the Historic House Trust of New York City and the City of New York/Parks & Recreation.

Thanks also to our NoHo neighbors Swift Hibernian Lounge and Puck Fair, Context Studios, Time Out New York, BBar & Grill, The Cooper Union, Phebe's, Time Cafe, Tower Records, and Plantworks.

(It's a good—no a great cause, too. This year, most of the Festival proceeds will go to the restoration of our east wall, where water infiltration is threatening the stability of the foundation wall.)

Life in the Past Lane. . .

By the 1850s, when New York City was the capital of the northeastern oyster industry, New Yorkers consumed more than \$6 million worth of oysters each year.

Won't You Join Us?

When you become a member of the Merchant's House Museum, you join a circle of individuals committed to the preservation of New York City's only family home preserved intact—inside and out—from the 19th century. The Merchant's House Museum depends greatly on its members to support educational programs for adults and schoolchildren, conservation of the collections, research, and restoration of its 1832 Landmark building.

- Good Neighbor—\$50 Family/Household—\$75
 Protector—\$125 Cultural Hero—\$250 Princely Supporter—\$500
 Leading Light—\$1,000 Paragon of Virtue—\$2,500 Senior Citizen/Student—\$25

Please make checks payable to the Merchant's House Museum and mail to 29 East Fourth Street, New York, NY 10003

I am enclosing a special gift of \$_____ to help with the East Wall Restoration.

Name(s) _____

Address _____

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Tuesday, September 26, 6 to 8 p.m.
Great New York Writers in Great New York Places
Washington Irving at The National Arts Club
 Reception following the reading.
 15 Gramercy Park South, Manhattan
 \$25. Reservations (212) 360-1378

Saturday, October 7, noon to 9 p.m.
Fourth Annual New York City Oyster Festival
 Prime Blue Point oysters, perfect pints of Guinness, sparkling and still wines, live bands throughout the day, the New York Oyster Shucking Competition and more. East Fourth and Lafayette Streets.

Tuesday, November 14, 6 to 8 p.m.
Great New York Writers in Great New York Places
Harlem Renaissance Writers at the Apollo Theater.
 Reception following the reading.
 253 West 125th Street, Manhattan
 \$25. Reservations (212) 360-137

Saturday, November 18, 12 to 4 p.m.
Workshop: Table Centerpieces and Decorations
 Create centerpieces and decorations for the holidays in this hands-on workshop. Refreshments. \$25 donation benefits the Garden Fund. Reservations, (212) 777-1089.

Thursday, November 30, 6:30 p.m.
The Palladian Background of the Classical Revival in 19th-Century New York: An Illustrated Slide Lecture
 Noted cultural historian and author David Garrard Lowe will explain how the villas, palaces, and churches of Palladio influenced the classical revival style in early 19th-century New York. In collaboration with the Beaux Arts Alliance. 115 East 74th Street. Reception follows. \$25, members \$15. Reservations required. (212) 777-1089

The Museum's public education programs are sponsored in part through the generous support of the Public Service Award grants program of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs.

Merchant's House Museum is the newsletter of the Museum.

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THE HISTORIC HOUSE TRUST OF NEW YORK CITY

Lafever Fever!

In conjunction with the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition, "Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861"

Thursday, October 26, through Monday, December 11
Exhibition: Minard Lafever and His Circle: The Diffusion of Grecian Architecture in the United States, 1830-1860
 Architectural models, drawings, photographs, and books from collections across the country illustrate the impact of Minard Lafever and his circle on American architecture. In collaboration with Classical America, the University of Notre Dame, and the Speros Basil Vyrionis Center for the Study of Hellenism.

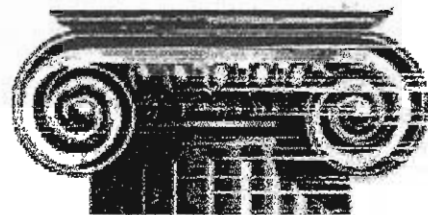
Saturday, October 28, and Sunday, October 29
Colloquium: Grecian Architecture in the United States
 In collaboration with Classical America, The Institute of Classical Architecture, Traditional Building Magazine, and Cooper Union Adult Education.

Saturday, October 28, 9 to 5 p.m.
 Six lectures will take place in the Great Hall of The Cooper Union, featuring Wendy A. Cooper, Lois F. and Henry S. McNeil Senior Curator of Furniture at Winterthur, Kenneth Hafertepe of Baylor University, Richard John of the University of Miami, Earle G. Shettleworth, Jr., Director of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Thomas Gordon Smith of the University of Notre Dame, and David Watkin, Fellow of Peterhouse, University of Cambridge.

Sunday, October 29, morning and afternoon
 Workshops in many aspects of Grecian architecture, for example, decorative plaster, scagliola faux finish, and restoring American Classical furniture. Tours of related architectural sites and private collections of furniture and decorative arts will also take place.

\$100 for the Saturday lectures; \$85 for the Sunday workshops and tours; \$165 for both.

For a registration form and a brochure listing all the workshops and tours, call The Institute of Classical Architecture (917) 237-1208.

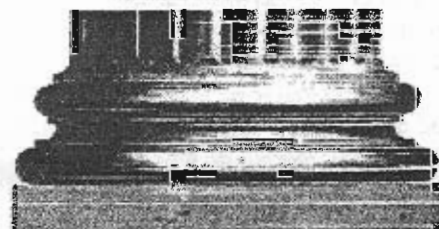


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Wednesdays, November 1, 8, 15, 1 to 4 p.m.

Architecture and Interior Design in the 19th-Century New York City Townhouse: A Case Study

This three-session course offered in collaboration with Parsons School of Design at the Merchant's House will include lectures and an in-depth tour of the Merchant's House and its collections; a walking tour of the neighborhood; and a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's exhibition, "Art and the Empire City: New York, 1825-1861." For information and registration, call Parsons at (212) 229-8933 or log on to www.parsons.edu/ce.

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