

## MANSION

## ELEMENTS

## TELL YOUR HOUSE, 'HOLD THAT POSE'

A sampling of house portraitists across the U.S. who can make homes as pretty as a picture

**PAINTING A PORTRAIT** of a house isn't an easy job, but at least these artists never worry about their subjects moving out of the frame, scratching an itch or getting thirsty.

Commonly commissioned as gifts, house portraits are especially appreciated when homeowners sell and want a to-

ken of remembrance. Occasionally, they're even used in marketing materials when the home is listed.

When looking for a portraitist, consider the artist's style and preferred medium. Will the finished work appear as a pen-and-ink on stationery or as an oil on canvas over the

fireplace? An Internet search will turn up plenty of options, but old-school artists still prefer driving to see the home rather than working solely from a photograph.

Here is a sampling of artists with unique styles.

—Megan Buerger

## STATELY ESTATE

Susan Stillman is based in White Plains, N.Y., and teaches graphic design at Parsons The New School for Design. Houses are her first love, though, and she makes an effort to visit each home she paints. She works with acrylics on canvas and describes her style as "painterly realist," with visible brush strokes and an acute attention to detail. Photo-realism is not the goal; she takes some artistic liberties, such as shifting a swimming pool into view or painting the tree buds a few months early. Many of her jobs are repeat clients: "It's always a fun phone call when they call me years later from across the country and say, we've got another one," says Ms. Stillman, age 56.



Clockwise from top right: Peter Dallison; David Dallison; Barbara Bellin; Rebekka Seale; Susan Stillman

## OLD WORLD VIEW

The Dallison brothers, Peter and David, take an old-school approach to house portraiture, preferring to paint almost exclusively on-site and encouraging homeowners to look over their shoulder while they work. Although they grew up learning from their father, also an illustrator, their styles are different: Peter, 47 and based in South Orange, N.J., does oil paintings (yellow house at right) and David, 49 and based in Waukegan, Ill., uses watercolor (brick house at right).



## STORYBOOK CHARM

During the summer of 1971, while exhibiting her paintings on Nantucket, Barbara Bellin was asked to do a home portrait. It wasn't long before neighbors noticed her sketching in the lawn and requested portraits of their own. Today, Ms. Bellin has studios in Manhattan and Westport, Conn., and says she has painted estates, hotels and embassies in 110 cities in three countries. Her portraits are meticulously drawn in pen and ink before being colored in with gouache and watercolor.



## FINE FOLK ART

A former wedding-cake chef, Rebekka Seale got her start in 2011 after she painted a friend's house as a birthday gift and was then featured on the design blog Design Sponge. Ms. Seale, 31 and based in Nashville, Tenn., works entirely from photographs, completing roughly 10 8-by-10-inch portraits per week. The end result is a playful, quirky watercolor and gouache rendering on archival watercolor paper. Portraits cost \$150 and include up to two pets in the image, custom lettering and a disc with a digital version of the portrait.

