

LOUISIANA homes & gardens

Color Rules

Outdoor Living

Gourmet Comfort Food at One

A Walk Through History

Roaming Gnomes

THE COMPLETE HOME RESOURCE MAGAZINE MAY 2008



MAY 2008 \$4.95



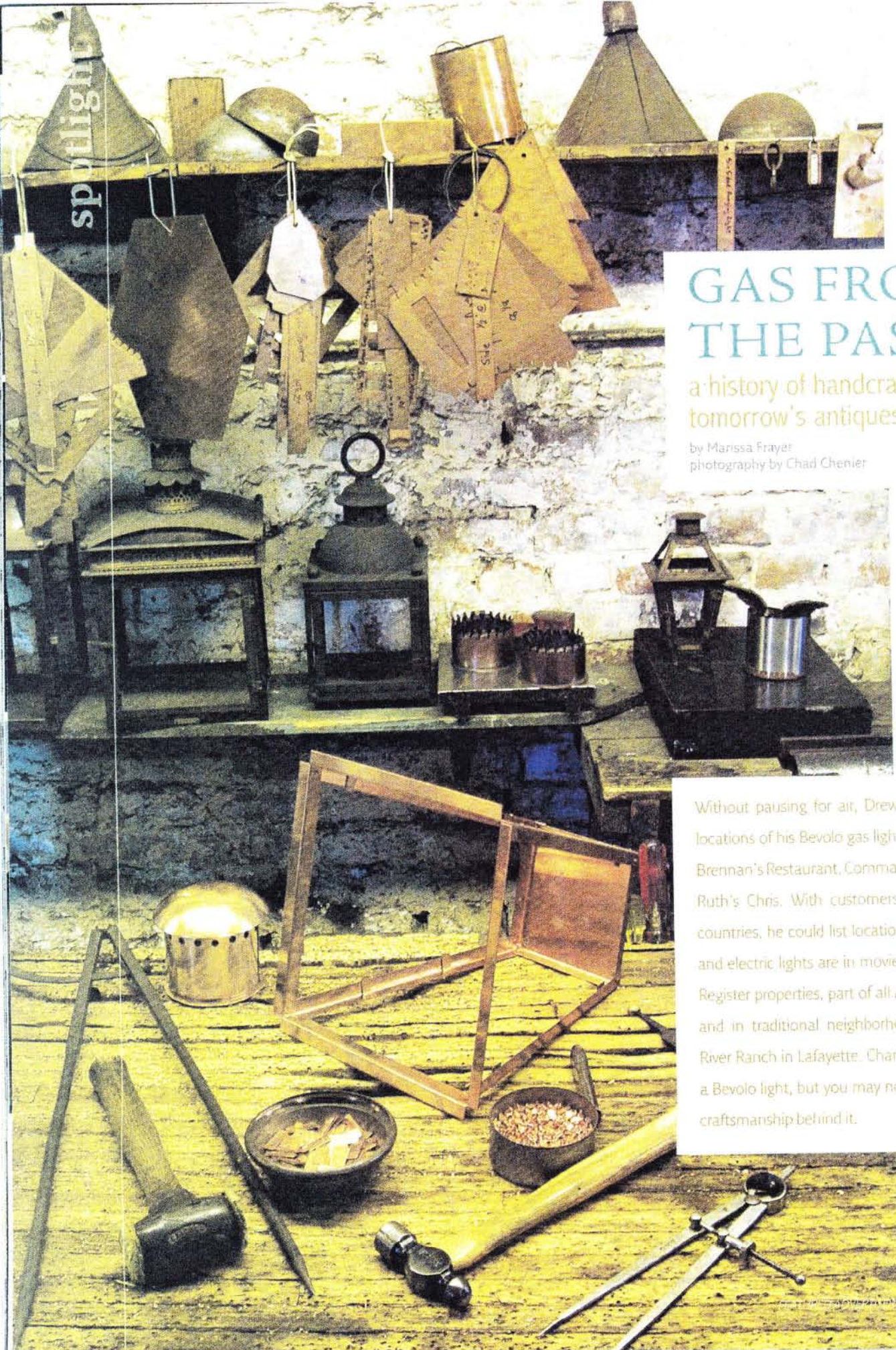
spotlight

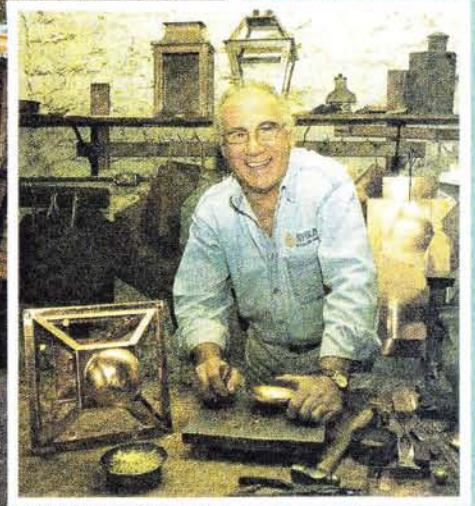
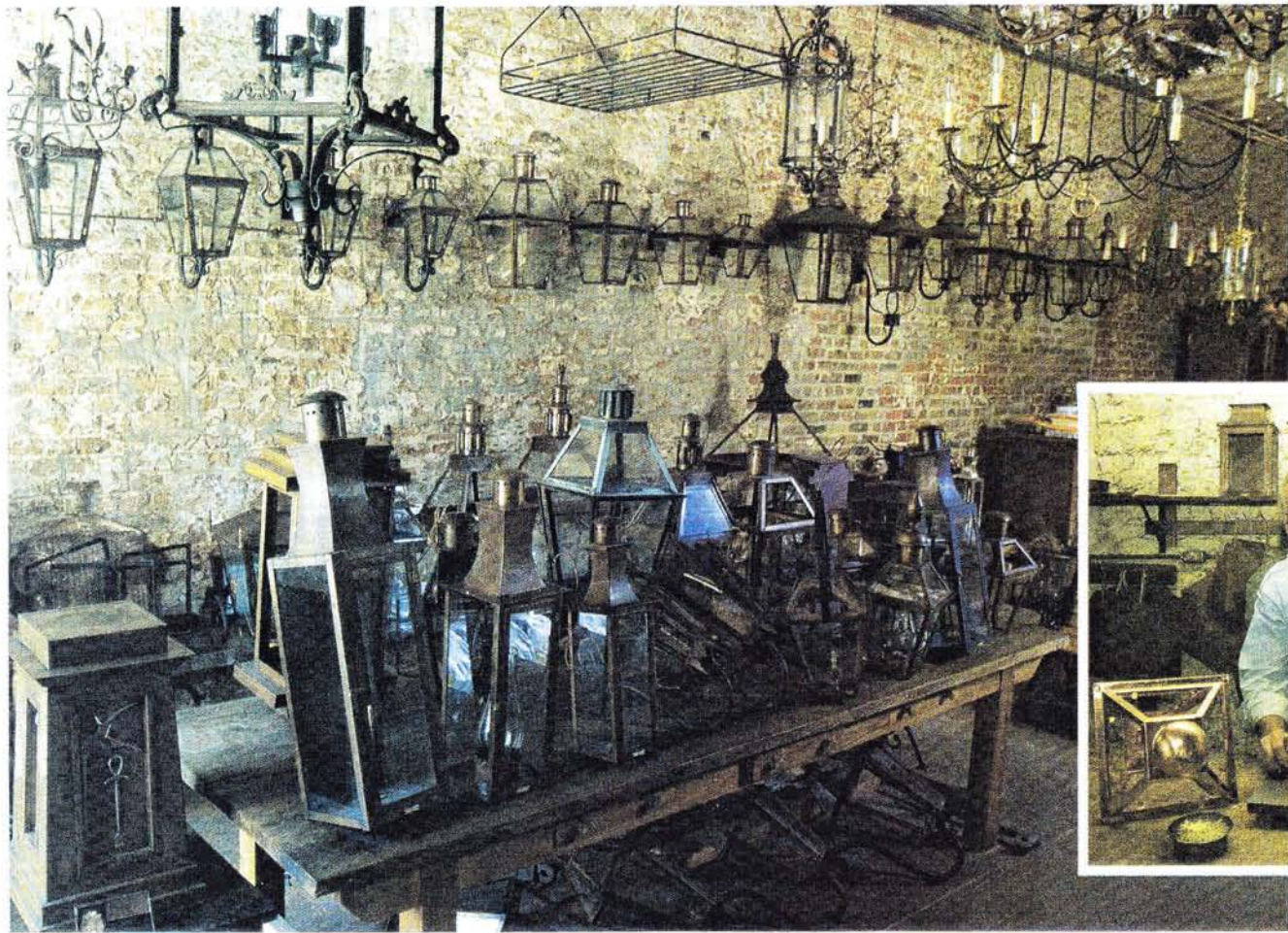
GAS FROM THE PAST

a history of handcrafting.
tomorrow's antiques

by Marissa Frayer
photography by Chad Chenier

Without pausing for air, Drew Bevolo can rattle off locations of his Bevolo gas light fixtures: the Cabildo, Brennan's Restaurant, Commander's Palace, Ereni's, Ruth's Chris. With customers in 50 states and 28 countries, he could list locations for days. Bevolo gas and electric lights are in movies, on National Historic Register properties, part of all A. Hays Town's homes, and in traditional neighborhood developments like River Ranch in Lafayette. Chances are, you have seen a Bevolo light, but you may not know the history and craftsmanship behind it.





The success of Bevolo is steeped in its 63-year history. Drew Bevolo's grandfather, Andrew Bevolo Sr., had already helped build the first Sikorksy helicopter and Higgins boats before putting his coppersmith skills to work in 1945 repairing old fixtures. With New Orleanians busily buying gas lanterns from London, Bevolo had plenty of work. These British fixtures were soldered and eventually came apart as the heat from the gas flame weakened the soldering. Bevolo began hand riveting the fixtures; an innovation still used today in all 500 styles, from colonial Williamsburg fixtures to traditional coach house lanterns.

Bevolo kept hammering away in his French Quarter shop. One fateful night, renowned architect A. Hays Town wandered in, lured by the noise of creation. Town had been walking the streets, making sketches of gas fixtures for a project. Bevolo essentially said, 'If you can draw it, I can make it.' And so the now-famous French Quarter fixture, found on street lamps throughout the French Quarter, came to be. "We've never changed that light one iota," Drew Bevolo says. "We've only made it better."

The core philosophies and practices in place that night are still employed today at Bevolo. Each light is handmade by a team of the company's 50 craftsmen, who start with a sheet of the world's best grade of copper and roll, bend, punch, and rivet it into the final product. Bevolo and his team work with architects, designers, and homeowners on new designs as well as selecting the right size and style to complement

each project. Whether you want a six-sided French Quarter gooseneck light for curb appeal or a French Quarter post light for backyard ambiance, Bevolo has the perfect fit. "We don't treat a customer with a single light any differently than a business that buys 1,000 lights," Bevolo says. Plus, Bevolo never discontinues a style and will service your light as long as you own it.

Bevolo is poised to make more history as it expands into new territory. Drew's son, Chris Bevolo, now runs the company's first freestanding retail store, which opened in April on Highway 59 in Covington across from American Factory Direct. Drew is busy prepping a line of table lamps, floor lamps, wall sconces, and chandeliers, made mostly of hand-hammered iron. And to further cement each light's place in history, Bevolo is about to start numbering each piece.

"They're going to be the antiques of tomorrow," Bevolo says. ♦

Opposite: With each Bevolo light fixture being handmade, a single fixture averages two days of work in man hours, depending on complexity and size.

Each Bevolo light is handmade by a team of the company's 50 craftsmen, who start with a sheet of the world's best grade of copper and roll, bend, punch, and rivet it into the final product. Bevolo has more than 500 different styles of lights and can create new ones to

BEVOLO GAS AND ELECTRIC LIGHTS

ADDRESS: 521 Conti St.
New Orleans, LA 70130

PHONE: (504) 522-9485

E-MAIL: gaslights@bevolo.com

WEBSITE: www.bevolo.com