

# Accented With a Portico

Sometimes all a house needs is one accent, one special feature, to change from ordinary to special. Such was the case with Louana and Ted Frois's Houston home. The two-story brick structure wasn't ugly; it was just so . . . plain.

The front entrance consisted of a recessed door flanked with fluted pilasters. Because the door was set back only 2 feet, it didn't afford much protection from the weather. The entrance was about the same size and visual importance as the adjoining windows. The house needed a focal point.

Architects Bill Curtis and Russell Windham, of Curtis & Windham Architects in Houston, suggested a small entry porch as a way to enliven the front of the house without involving a complete redo.

The portico the architects designed combines stock and custom parts that bring new importance to the entrance. The original door was kept (and painted white), but the pilasters on either side were removed and wood panels added. Next, a pair of stock Ionic half-columns were attached to the brick. Two more full columns, added to support the portico's roof, were placed slightly closer together than the engaged half-columns. This allows the roof of the portico to curve gently, echoing the shallow arches above the first-floor windows.

To enrich the horizontal band (called a frieze) that supports the roof, the architects used groups of vertical grooves routed in the wood.

Routed ellipses hold stock decorative wood rosettes.

For a crowning touch, the architects added a classically detailed wooden railing atop the flat copper roof. Although the railing serves no functional purpose, it adds height and importance to the portico and helps fill the blank space between the top of the portico and the window above. *Louis Joyner*



*A portico addition brings a focal point to this 40-year-old house. The decorative railing above adds height to the flat-roofed porch. Before the portico was added (inset), the house lacked a strongly defined entry.*



*Richly detailed in the classical manner, the portico offers weather protection for guests. Stock Ionic columns support the roof structure; routed vertical grooves in the horizontal band replicate the triglyphs of ancient Greek architecture.*

PHOTOGRAPHS: JEAN ALLSOPP / WOODWORK: DAVE WRIGHT, HOUSTON