

\* Title slide  
Shirley Wilde for ...

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## GRACEFIELD

1. If architecture can be described as frozen music then the Grace home at 3816 Duke Road in Metchosin, as it appeared in this photo, might be described as more frozen than most. Built in 1942 the house had slumbered along, virtually without any maintenance until 1991 when it was purchased by Shirley Wilde.
2. Robert and Rita-Francis Grace moved to Victoria from Chicago in 1942. Mr. Grace's family had been very successful building contractors and had been responsible for projects such as Grand Central Station and buildings at the University of Chicago and the Chicago World's Fair. Mr. & Mrs. Grace purchased 78 acres of the former Annie Duke property in Metchosin and built a substantial 3300 square foot house inspired by the classical revival style of Martha Washington's family home in America.
3. When the property was purchased by Shirley Wilde in March of 1991 she was faced with the enormous task of repairing and restoring a home that had not seen a lick of paint or any significant maintenance in nearly 50 years. An additional challenge was the necessity that the house be available for occupancy within a period of about 6 weeks. Working with B.C. Gypsum and foreman Dave Dziadyk (Jedick) a team of workmen moved methodically through the house - completing one task in order to make way for another team to take over. Drywalling, plaster repair, plumbing, wiring, heating, painting and insulation all had to be completed within this very tight time frame.



4. The back porch was repaired.
5. Rotten steps replaced and a new roof installed.
6. The rear porch and balcony ~~was~~ in dreadful condition. <sup>\* slide</sup> The rear upper balcony was stabilized with a jack while a new post was readied. Original garden furniture, weathered and rusted, is visible on the patio.
7. Rebuilt and painted appropriately in its original white colour scheme the house begins to display some of the fine detailing which Mr. Grace insisted upon during its construction.
8. The front door, as found, with its original hardware. Not only did rain pour in around the door it actually rained through the door.
9. Repaired and refurbished with original hardware retained.
10. The basement door showing signs of major problems with damp. One can only imagine the smell!
11. Freshly painted, repaired and waterproofed.
12. The french ~~d~~oors in the dining room which also show the damage caused by lack of maintenance.
13. Repaired and sporting handsome refurbished hardware. This slide also show the unique inside screens that are permanently fitted within each window unit.



14. The restored dining room with its original light fixtures. The dining room suite, which was original to the house, was rescued by Shirley Wilde and totally rebuilt and refinished. The Adam-style fireplace is one of 5 in the house.

15. An upstairs bedroom features the original polished cotton curtains.

16. Stained and stiff with dirt when found the magnolia-print curtains were gently soaked clean and reinstalled using their original tiebacks.

17. The chimneys were cleaned, repointed and rebuilt from the roofline up. Extensive landscaping was undertaken which revealed rockeries and the circular driveway.

18. The pillars were found to have totally rotten feet and were held in place only by their attachment to the upper balcony. Concrete pads were installed and the original pillars retained.

19. The pillars, returned to their load-bearing function, now support the rebuilt upper balcony. Replacement shutters were painted in the original colour which was determined by examining paint flakes found on the backs of the original unsalvageable shutters.

20. A second-storey balconette had never been installed due to lack of funds.



21. An appropriate balconette was fabricated using proportions determined by the fanlight window above the door. The original light fixtures are, in fact, a ship's running lights.

22. In addition to the extensive interior and exterior work that was undertaken other major and expensive projects such as the installation of 4 new power poles had to be undertaken.

23. All of this effort seems more than worthwhile when the house's spectacular location is also taken into account. Set on 11 acres it looks out over a beautiful orchard towards the Olympic Mts. This significant rural setting was preserved due to Shirley Wilde's determination that the property be maintained as found and not subdivided into the 11 building lots which would have been permitted under current zoning.

24. The Grace property has been a romantic folly for many years.

*"last night I dreamt I went to Mandalay" ---*

25. Now, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of Shirley Wilde and her team, the house has been returned to its original pristine condition and is now a major architectural landmark <sup>in Metkosi</sup> rather than simply a picturesque oddity.

26. The Grace home has been the subject of much curiosity over the years. Now operated as Gracefield Manor Bed and Breakfast the house has finally opened its doors to visitors and now offers the kind of gracious hospitality that it was always intended to provide.

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Invite Shirley Wilde to come/hobble up.