



The Merwyn Apartments in Astoria.



Photos by Lissa Brewer/The Astorian

LEFT: The front door of the restored Merwyn building. RIGHT: Lucien Swerdloff opens the door to his Astoria studio, where students can engage in a hands-on experience of historic preservation.



ABOVE: The restored entrance to the Merwyn in Astoria. BELOW: A case in the lobby of the restored Merwyn building displays a set of artifacts from the building's pre-restoration state. RIGHT: Restoration of this home was recognized in the residential category.



## Preservation: 'These old houses, they're changing, living things'

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Swerdloff's historic preservation program at Clatsop Community College is one of just a handful of its kind, allowing students to integrate history, theory and practice from the ground up.

"These old houses, they're changing, living things," Swerdloff said. "People come into a house, they take something out, they put something in, and if you want to restore that house you have to decide how you want to restore it. What do you want to restore it to?"

"You have to understand the different materials and how they behave, what's compatible and what modern substitutes are compatible," he said, citing an example of historic plaster, once made using hair from horses.

It's the sort of detail that led Swerdloff to take a leading role in founding the preservation program over a decade ago.

"A few of the local builders and architects, we all got together and decided that there was a need for something like this," he said. "The idea was to train people that had these traditional skills, so that they could work on these historic buildings."

Swerdloff is a recipient of this year's Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award. Named for a pioneer of historic preservation in Astoria, the award coincides with National Preservation Month, celebrated throughout May.

Two local buildings received the award as well. In the residential category, the restoration of Theodosia Woods' Italianate style home,



With a bright yellow hue and extensive historic detail, the Alderbrook home of Theodosia Woods received a 2022 Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award.

located in Astoria's Alderbrook neighborhood, was honored. Woods' daughter, Linden Clark, dedicated extensive time to hands-on restoration.

The Merwyn Apartments were also celebrated for an

extensive commercial rehabilitation. First constructed in 1926, the downtown complex once operated as a hotel, and was previously slated for demolition before its transformation into housing.

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