

## Front Porches

A place for community building and watching the world go by

Front porches have been part of American architecture since Colonial days. Other cultures have them, but no one else has embraced porch life as wholeheartedly.

The front porch is “the interface between the private world and your community,” says Claude Stephens, founder of the Professional Porch Sitters Union. Stephens attended a number of community meetings with long agendas and found little was accomplished.

“Then a bunch of us were kicking around ideas on my porch and I said, ‘We’re getting more done on this porch than in the tightest agenda.’”

Front porches dropped in popularity in the mid-1900s when radio, TV, and automobiles wooed people away. But they’re making a comeback: 63 percent of single-family homes built in the U.S. in 2013 had porches, up from 42 percent in 1993. The front porch is “a way of thinking about the world,” Stephens says. “We use it as a verb: ‘Would you like to come over and do a little porching?’”

Why, yes, come to think of it. We would. —Kathleen McCleary

