

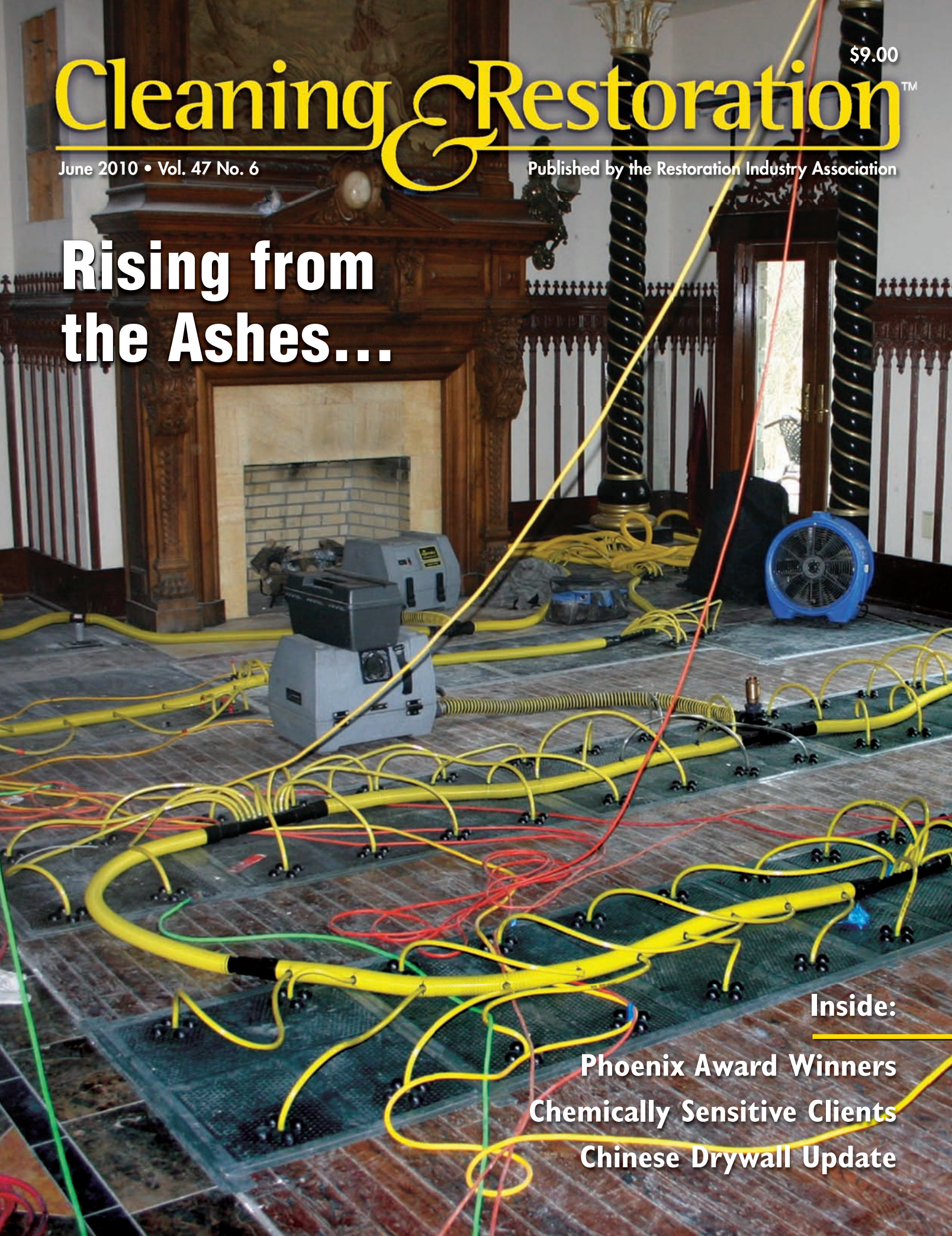
Cleaning & Restoration™

\$9.00

June 2010 • Vol. 47 No. 6

Published by the Restoration Industry Association

Rising from the Ashes...



Inside:

**Phoenix Award Winners
Chemically Sensitive Clients
Chinese Drywall Update**

Phoenix Award Winner Exceeds Expectations

By Patricia L. Harman

Along the edge of Boone Lake in Johnson City, Tenn., sits the chateau known as Crantzdorf Castle, a 21-room, home owned by Steve and Ashley Grindstaff. It took 10 years of collaboration between the Grindstaffs, their craftsmen and architects to create this more than 20,000 square foot house that includes soaring ceilings, stained glass windows, Italian marble floors and hand-cast moldings.

On January 10, 2009, one of the castle's turrets was struck by lightning during a thunderstorm, igniting a fire that engulfed the roof and top floor of the three-story building. The Grindstaffs were out to dinner that evening, celebrating Ashley's birthday when they received the news.

It took approximately 24 fire fighters about 2 and 1/2 hours to contain the fire and about 70,000 gallons of water to extinguish it. They had to stop at least twice to let the water drain out of the home to protect its structural integrity.

Since the home is self-insured, insurance would not cover the damage, reconstruction, restoration or lost contents. The home is filled with priceless antiques appraised at \$5 million and more than \$200,000 worth of Oriental rugs. In addition, there are a variety of hard surface floors throughout the house, an indoor basketball court, a home theater, a replica of the Bristol Motor Speedway complete with six cars, irreplaceable sports memorabilia, fireplace mantels from Europe, decorative tapestries and a bar that came from an Irish pub in the billiard room.

The majority of the damage from the fire was on the third floor of the home and the roof. In the main portion of the house are the grand entry hall, library, great hall, guest quarters, office, kitchen, dining hall, billiard room, sitting room and the third floor exercise gym, all of which sustained some damage. The south wing, which includes the master suite, children's rooms, extra guest rooms and the exquisite theater designed by Theo Kalomirakis, also suffered heavy water damage from putting out the fire and the continuing rain. And, while the north wing was initially spared, an arctic blast froze the pipes in that section of the house, which flooded the four-car garage area.



Several companies came to walk the loss and provide estimates on what it would cost to rebuild after the house was gutted down to its studs. Only one, however, said they could dry out the structure, restore the contents and save most if not all of the wood detailing throughout the house, as well as the floors, woodwork, rugs and furniture – that company was Spotless Carpet Cleaners and Janitorial Services, Inc.

“The toughest challenge we faced to complete this project was to get the homeowner on board with the restoration idea,” explained Bob Pakrul, president of Spotless. “He had been told by everyone to this point that the entire house would have to be gutted to the studs, maybe further in some areas, because water had ruined everything. Our approach on drying and restoring was the first time he had even considered it!”

Despite having some doubts about the success of the restoration and drying operation, Grindstaff agreed to give it a try after Pakrul brought in drying specialist and instructor, Chuck DeWald, Jr., to explain specifically how they would be drying the structure and its contents.

Within 24 hours, Spotless had converted the basketball court into a drying chamber for the most heavily damaged contents such as upholstered furniture, Oriental rugs and



Ceiling medallion in the Great Hall.



draperies. The wood furniture had begun to degrade because of the moisture, so drying it quickly was imperative. Spotless contracted with Gentry Moving Company to pack up and move the contents to the drying chamber.

“With over \$5 million in antiques, we wanted to save these if we could,” said Spotless manager Jim Olinger.

Other issues Spotless had to address included removing all of the free standing water left in the structure; getting a temporary roof on the home to keep more rain from coming

Hot Points

- ▶ 20,000+ sq. ft. house suffered fire/water damage
- ▶ Antiques & contents were valued at \$5 million+
- ▶ Owner was self-insured
- ▶ Multiple challenges with flooring surfaces, irreplaceable contents & hand-cast moldings

in and to protect the home from the elements; getting drying equipment large enough to effectively handle the situation; and providing the power to run it. Altogether it took Spotless just over two weeks to fully dry out the house.

“The wood floors created a challenge because they were saturated and cupped,” explained Olinger, “but tenting and drying the hard wood floors resulted in a loss of less than 40 square feet. These were the areas the fire department chopped out to allow the nearly 600,000 pounds of water to drain out of the structure.” In all, there were approximately 15,000 square feet of hardwood floors to be dried, as well as floors made of ceramic tile, polished stone, slate and terracotta.

All of the rooms contained elaborate crown and base moldings in addition to ceiling medallions and ornate wainscoting. The



Great Hall.

hand-carved ceiling medallion in the front entry hall frames a chandelier that was featured in the movie, “The Haunting.” Created by artisans at a cost of \$250,000, Spotless was able to save the medallion and the chandelier is being repaired by experts hired by the homeowner.

The interior doors were two-inch solid wood panels with oversized solid wood casings. At the front entrance were two, 22-foot high entry doors from the French Music Conservatory in Paris. All of the doors were dried and successfully restored to their pre-damage state.

The dining room required special attention because of the sculpted concave ceiling made of tiles that were created from soils excavated at the home’s building site and created by craftsmen onsite.

Spotless was able to save those tiles and all of the plastered medallions in the ceilings, as well as the wood mantels on the fireplaces throughout the house. Several of the mantels had been acquired from castles throughout Europe and would have been impossible to replace.



Billiard Room – before.



Billiard Room – after.

In the kitchen, where there were a combination of stone floors, cabinets, stained glass windows and ceramic countertops, only one cabinet had to be re-stained. Spotless was able to restore and dry the structure and contents not burned in the fire to the owners’ satisfaction. Altogether, the savings to the Grindstuffs, not including the contents that were restored, were well into the millions of dollars.

Throughout the entire process, Olinger and Pakrul kept the clients apprised of the situation and their progress. The Grindstuffs were surprised that Spotless was able to dry the floors and walls using injection systems, but they were impressed with the results.

The project required ingenuity and the knowledge and equipment of several experts to create a successful outcome. Steve Grindstaff summed up the entire experience when he said, “Spotless saved all of our floors, irreplaceable artworks, mantels and antiques. They exceeded all of my expectations.” ■

Patricia L. Harman is editor-in-chief of Cleaning & Restoration.

Photos courtesy of Spotless Carpet Cleaners & Janitorial Services, Inc. and Steve Grindstaff.