The Olde World has come to Texas!
And yet another owner-builder has installed a beautiful slate roof
that would be the envy of any professional roofing contractor. Lord Harrington's elegant slate and copper roof on the Chateau Woda
Nympee, near Fort Worth, Texas, was a four man job: "One English-
man, one Yankee, one boom lift, and the Slate Roof Bible."

Lord Harrington, an artist, fine-art photographer and architect,
designed the roof himself, or as he describes it, "I designed it as
we went, sort of as Antonio Gaudi did with his architecture, in a
sort of synthetic organic manor. That and plenty of Johnny Walker
Scotch whisky as fortification."

Chateau Woda Nympee means “water nymph” in a Baltic
tongue and was named in honor of Lord Harrington’s wife. It took
months to install the roof. "How long did it take me and how long
should it have taken are two different things entirely. I worked upon it
with one man and one machine at a time. I believe it took 4-5
months. We kept having problems with rented boom lifts breaking
and leaving us down for over a week here and there, and
with my schedule. I eventually bought an eighty-five foot snorkel
lift, and told the rental place to stick their rubbish...."

An aluminum lion, air-bushed with Emron paint, perches on
a brick pedestal at the peak of the roof, designed from the fam-
ily coat of arms. The finial on the "Witches Crowne" turret is also
made of aluminium, with a 2" steel bolt running through a series of
centre compression rings and bolted inside the turret. This pow-
der-coated adornment was machined at a local sheet metal
shop to drawings and specifications provided by Harrington.

The roof was made
up of about 60 squares of
Vermont 1/4” slate intrically
designed in patterns of pur-
ples, greens and reds.
Twenty-ounce copper was
used to make the valleys,
ridges and eaves. The
ridges were nailed and
screwed with stainless
steel screws. The finials
are copper and stainless
steel, lag bolted into place with stainless steel lag bolts.

The slate is installed
with a 3” headlap and 3”
sidelaps, although Harrington admits, "On the
very top third of the south
side we got off
course a bit and the headlap may
approximate 2 1/2”
to 2” on a few
courses.” The roof pitch
is 24/12 on the main body
of the building, so 2” of headlap
should work nicely anyway. The slating nails were 1 3/4” to 2 ”
copper.

Harrington confesses that, "There is an occasional piece of
copper showing on the side lap (particularly on those slates we
dragon-scaled). This is due to the slate side laps being very close
to 2” or 2 1/2” and I not wanting go down and get another damn
slate that should work better. It was twenty-seven degrees Fahre-
heit, with the wind blowing 25 miles per hour and we were 65 feet
in the air on a boom lift!"

The roof sheathing is 3/4” tongue and groove plywood, glued,
screwed and nailed with galvanized ring shank nails. This decking
material was “recommended and ‘preferred’ by the slate quarry
themselves. I know your opinion and I agree, yet that’s the way
they directed me. Due to ignorance on my part, I listened to them. I
had not read your book [The Slate Roof Bible] as yet.” [Editor’s
note: We strongly recommend solid lumber boards underneath
slate roofing, not laminated or glued wood materials.]

90 lb. roll roofing with a galvanized comb and tarred seams
were used as underlayment. "I knew this project would take an un-
known amount of time to finish due to the heights and it being we
are two bands of merry men."

The first crew was Rodney, Lord Harrington (at large), Billy Ray Hart of
Ohio, Johnny Walker of Scotland, and Snorkel lift of Deutschland. The second
crew consisted of Rodney, Lord Harrington (at large), Ryan Sparks of England, Johnny
Walker of Scotland, and Snorkel lift of Deutschland.

Obviously, those Scots sure know
how to lay slate!