

346 W. Scenic Drive

The story of this house is a story of several dreams come true. Victor and Gisselle Franco moved to Monrovia shortly after their marriage and purchased a house on South Magnolia Avenue. Gisselle enjoyed taking long walks around Monrovia to acquaint herself with the city, and discovered the foothills of Monrovia in the course of her travels. This house caught her eye in particular as being the epitome of her dream home. The style, Spanish Colonial Revival, and the setting, on a spacious corner adjacent to the foothills, were just right. For three years, Victor and Gisselle worked with a local Realtor in a effort to find an available house that provided the right style and setting. One momentous day in 1995 the Realtor called to say that a house had just been listed that seemed to match their criteria. In fact, it had been listed for an hour only! The Realtor gave them the address, and agreed to meet them at the house right away. As Victor and Gisselle neared their destination, recognition began to dawn. It was the house. Needless to say, negotiations were brief and conclusive. The dream had come true!

Entry Hall

The tiles surrounding the entry door on the exterior were added by Victor and Gisselle, who plan to replace the exiting front door with a 200 year old antique from Mexico. The faux finish on the walls of the entry hall, living room, and dining room was carefully selected to complement the style of the house. The newel post and railing on the stairway are new, and were hand-crafted to a design selected by Victor after carefully researching the Spanish Colonial period for appropriate examples. (The exterior railings leading to the French doors in the living room also match this design.) The risers on the stairs leading to the second floor are now faced with tile--an addition appropriate to the style of the house.

Living Room

The piano was purchased from Patty's Antiques in Monrovia and was a surprise present to Gisselle from Victor on their first anniversary. It was Gisselle's dream piano, purchased behind her back with Patty's collusion! The only structural change to the room is the French doors leading to the front patio. They replace a double casement window. The new woodwork was specially milled to match the original door and window casings in the room. The Baroque style mirror over the fireplace is an antique, and was obtained in Mexico, as were the matching arm chairs. The couch and arm chair are covered in an interesting textured material obtained in Mexico. The costume displayed on the south wall was Victor's attire when he participated in a folk dance troop at UCLA. It was hand stitched by the Huitichol Indians of Central Mexico. The decorative tapestry is from Peru, while the floor and table lamps are from Historic Lighting in Monrovia.

Dining Room

The beveled ceiling is original to the room, while the hanging light fixture is another fine period re-creation from Historic Lighting. The massive dining room table and chairs are carved mahogany and were purchased in Mexico. There is a sewing machine concealed in the oak library table! The sideboard was purchased by Gisselle at a yard sale and was carefully stripped and refinished to highlight the rich wood. The artwork on the west wall is by the noted artist, Simon Silva. The only structural change to the room is the archway leading to the kitchen that replaces a rectangular doorway.

Breakfast Nook and Kitchen

The beveled ceiling in the breakfast nook is also original. The archway between the breakfast room and the kitchen is new and less constricting than the original smaller opening. The tile floor was added at the time that both rooms were remodeled. No longer visible is the heat register in the breakfast nook where the son of former owners routinely disposed of his hated weekly ration of liver. His secret was secure until the day his father fired up the furnace in the basement. A thick cloud of acrid smoke filled the house as his irate father charged up the stairs from the basement, looking for the culprit! The cabinets in both rooms were custom made from cherry by a local artisan. The tile for both the floor and the counter tops was personally selected by the owners and was purchased in Guadalajara. The archways are decorated with a vine motif stenciled by another local artist. The artwork decorating the rooms is by the artist Manuel Lepe, whose works focus on children and the theme of "Heaven on Earth". As you pass through the kitchen, look through the window over the sink and notice the decorative artwork on the wall across the rear patio. Only the center wrought iron grill is physically there. The two flanking grills are stenciled copies.

The Den

Victor and Gisselle plan to replace the windows on the west wall with French doors that will lead to a renovated outside area including an outdoor kitchen.

Upstairs Bathroom

This bathroom has been completely remodeled and enhanced with additional tile from Mexico. Care was taken to re-design the room so that no exterior structural alterations to the house were necessary.

West Bedroom

Victor and Gisselle's daughter, Noelle, enjoys this large room with its own private balcony and view of the mountains.

Master Bedroom

Interesting items of furniture in this room include the armoire, the cabinet style sewing machine, the Jacobean lamp table, the Mission Style rocking chair, and the dresser. The rocking chair was in pieces when it was found by Gisselle, who carefully reassembled and refinished it. The dresser, also refinished by Giselle, was her first purchase when she began to collect and restore antiques. The bathroom is still in a "before" state, and will be completely remodeled to match the "after" bathroom.