2009 Home Tour

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|  | 1115 Olive St. home photo**Home ofHill Rylander & Kyle Bass1115 Olive St.**  |

This quaint house at 115 Olive Street is dressed up to celebrate its 100th birthday this year and is ready to open its doors for a Heritage Home Tour welcome. Built in 1909 by Daniel McKie, it was a Texas-style farmhouse located at what was then the edge of town. Around the same time, the current owner’s ancestors, John Pitts and family, arrived in Stringtown via a covered wagon caravan two miles long, having trekked from Plains, Georgia. Mr. Pitts was one of the original founders of the First Methodist Church in San Marcos.

The house has changed hands five times since then. The current owner, Hill Rylander, bought the house for a “retirement” home in 2007. He was seeking a smaller home with low maintenance, but also with historic significance. Having been extensively renovated in 2008 with new wiring, plumbing, all new fixtures and appliances, Mr. Rylander thought the house a perfect fit. He added the porches in the back in 2008 and 2009. When the house was renovated by James Moore in 2008, the floor of the house was sitting on the ground and had to be raised and set on pier and beams. During the same time, the front lawn was landscaped with native plants and flowers.

Inside are 10 ft. ceilings and the original pine wood floor. Mr. Rylander has many inherited family antiques. Two pieces he especially treasures are a breakfront in the dining room and armoire in the living room. His mother’s French crystal finial collection is also on display.

The Heritage Association honored this house with a Landmark Award in 2008, naming it as worthy of citation for preservation efforts. All are invited to come visit this sweet little gem!

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|  | 2801 Ranch Road 12 home photo**San Marcos Baptist AcademyDr. & Mrs. John Garrison12801 Ranch Road 12**  |

From its inception, San Marcos Baptist Academy has been a successful partnership between the citizens of San Marcos and Texas Baptists. Just a little over a hundred years ago, San Marcos citizens raised $25,000 to match a like amount raised by Texas Baptists to fund the original campus of the Academy which was built in the shadow of the new normal school in town. Fifty-seven acres of land were given for the campus by citizens of San Marcos so that the Academy might be located here. Other locations being considered for the Academy included San Antonio, Gonzales, and Seguin. None of these cities matched the generous contributions offered by the citizens of San Marcos.

The Academy has provided a small school educational experience based on Christian values to hundreds of students from Texas and from around the world who have enrolled since the doors opened for the first classes on September 24, 1908. In its first year, the only building at the Academy was Carroll Hall. Located just a stone’s throw from Old Main at Southwest Texas State Normal School which had opened just five years earlier, Carroll Hall would be the centerpiece of the Academy campus until its move to a new campus in 1981.

From its earliest days, the Academy President’s house was always a special place on campus. The first Academy President’s house, a two story frame residence built in 1918 on Academy Street, was home to seven Academy presidents. The site for that house is now part of the campus of Texas State University. The second President’s home was built in 1966 and is presently the home for the President of Texas State University. The third Academy President’s home, situated on a large tract of hill country ranch land just off of Ranch Road 12, was built in l981, and shares many of the features of the second President’s home constructed in 1966. Although the two houses have much in common, the current President’s house has some features that work particularly well on this prime hill country ranch land including a Texas stone exterior, covered porches on the front and back of the house, a downstairs guest bedroom, and a library/study on the ground floor.

The President’s house at the Ranch Road 12 location has been home to four Academy presidents: Dr. and Mrs. Jack Byrom, Dr. and Mrs. Paul Armes, Lt. Col. and Mrs. Vic Schmidt, and current President Dr. John Garrison and his wife, Carol.

The spacious 5,500 square foot home is situated on slightly more than 1.5 acres of land with towering oak trees dominating the front and back yards. The expansive back yard is enclosed within a wrought iron and stone fence. The house features three fireplaces, gorgeous crown moulding and high ceilings throughout the living areas, and a circular staircase in the kitchen, a companion to the grand staircase in the entryway.

An antique revolving bookcase in the President’s study dates back to the Academy’s first President, Dr. J. M. Carroll (1907 – 1911), as well as Dr. Carroll’s desk located in the entryway. Another historical feature is a column from the original main building constructed in 1907 which stands in the entryway, just inside the beautiful leaded glass front door. Plantation shutters complement large picture windows throughout the house…windows that overlook the beautiful Texas Hill Country campus.

The Garrisons, who are in their first year at the Academy, moved to campus in October at the completion of Dr. Garrison’s long career at Texas State, a career that spanned more than 30 years. They have enjoyed hosting visitors to the Academy, members of the San Marcos community, Texas State colleagues, city officials, as well as Academy family members, students, and parents.

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|  | 516 W. Hopkins St. home photo**Home ofJeff & Rhea Kester516 W. Hopkins St.**  |

If modern technology had been available over a century ago when the Fort Street Building, located at 516 West Hopkins, was completed, a camera might have been mounted on its tall, Gothic-style steeple. What a panorama of change it would have chronicled through the passing years for the community and the stately building!

Samuel Bales, Superintendent of Construction of the State Capitol Building in Austin, moved to San Marcos in the 1850’s and became an influential community leader. He built the original church in 1894. At that time, the building was located in the midst of a quiet residential area and on a major road, now West Hopkins, leading into the city square. Unfortunately, the church burned shortly after completion.

When the Fort Street Building was proudly re-occupied in 1901 by the congregation of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, it was the culmination of a re-building effort that brought forth the new building from the charred remains of the original building. The architectural style of the new building was Gothic Victorian with Queen Anne influence, a style characterized by steep pitched roofs, vertical massing and the gothic-style, pointed arches at the windows and doors. Cumberland Presbyterian Church occupied the building for forty years. When the Cumberland Presbyterians merged with the First Presbyterian Church, the building was sold to a second congregation.

First American Lutheran Church purchased the property in 1941 and it became their home for the next 28 years. In response to the growing membership, the Lutheran congregation moved to a new and larger facility in 1969 and the building, once again, was sold.

The third, and last church to occupy the property was the Pentecostal Holiness Church, which occupied the building until 1975.

The building stood vacant for many years, abandoned in a fringe area of a rapidly expanding downtown. It had become derelict and was in very poor condition until it was purchased and rescued by Jeff and Rhea Kester.

The building was restored in phases from 1987 through 1998 by the Kesters and now houses the architectural practice of Gomillion, Kester, Zimmerman, Inc. and the law offices of Fay and Rick Gillham. The Kesters reside in the original sanctuary, which was converted into a loft apartment.

Repurposed to fit the needs of contemporary site use and modern-day living, the Fort Street Building maintains the architectural and design integrity of its origin and continues to aesthetically nourish and contribute to the character of the community of San Marcos. The Heritage Association of San Marcos is pleased to include this historic property on its 2009 Tour.

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|  | 2390 Post Rd. home photo**Home ofTom & Jodi Atkinson2390 Post Rd.**  |

The spectacular, turn-of-the-century home at 2390 Post Road has often been referred to as “The Yellow House” that used to sit out in the middle of the cactus field on Post Road for about 100 years. The home was built in the early 1900’s with records suggesting around 1904. In 2002, the family sold the land and moved the house to its present location where it sits nestled among 15 acres of Texas live oaks in a private country location on Post Road between San Marcos and Kyle. Entering the home gives one the feeling of travelling back in time to a gentler, less-hurried era.

Current owners, Jodi and Tom Atkinson, have gently renovated the home, which still has its original lapboard siding. An additional garden kitchen sitting area was recently added to the rear of the home, increasing its footage to approximately 3800 square feet. The long leaf pine floors have been beautifully restored and the bead board chair rails throughout the house serve as a perfect complement to the Italian wallpaper in the foyer. Above each of the beautiful doors are cantilever windows in perfect working condition. There are six bedrooms, 3½ bathrooms, two living areas, and a large gathering kitchen and sunroom. An antique oak table pulls out to seat 6 and the French Country table seats 14. All of the rooms have been filled with priceless treasures.

Among the owner’s many collections, she enjoys selecting chairs and creating sitting areas. There are a number of chairs, benches, satees and wing backs from all over the world, some recovered and some with their original silk fabrics. A few guests’ favorites are the French pink velvet couch and matching chair in the Great Room. The detail of the carvings of the figures embroiders the head and arm rests making this set truly one of a kind. One also cannot help but be drawn to the many hand woven rugs throughout the rooms and hallways from Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and the classic Orient. Each rug was hand selected to compliment the arrangement of the rooms; some from auctions, some from personal travels and some from her father who is military and traveled to these countries. There is also a diverse selection of plant stands some with Queen Anne footings, others with claw feet with media ranging from the classic oak to carved mahogany. Two of the bathrooms have been fitted with double lavatories, tucked into beautiful antique buffets. The home’s three fireplaces showcase mantles with gorgeous detail and tile work. All of the fireplaces in the home have been restored and converted to gas. Wide wrap-around porches, on both levels, offer panoramic views and are the perfect place to watch the surrounding wildlife, read a book, visit with friends, or simply have a cup of coffee.

The Chantilly Suite on the first floor consists of two bedrooms, each with its own fireplace, connected by a bath complete with one of the two claw foot tubs in the home, a separate shower, and one of the beautiful antique buffet vanities. True to its name, there are French paintings, Chantilly lace curtains and a French brass coach clock sitting above the mantle.

At the top of the massive oak staircase is a landing, connecting the remaining four bedrooms. The Master Suite bedroom at the top of the stairs features a bright, double-vanity bath and a king size bed with classic white wicker throughout. The Hillcrest Room, with its own access to the upstairs wrap-around porch, features a European king brass bed and yet another notable silk wing back chair. The Wyeth Country Room takes one back to days of old with its oak fireplace and unique opaque tile border. And you can curl up with a book on the trundle day bed in the Library, then convert the trundle into two twin beds to sleep additional guests at night. At one point, this property was utilized as a Bed & Breakfast for large families and group gatherings. Although, now the current owners’ home, it takes little imagination to see that the home was designed for comfort and relaxation.

The theme, throughout the home, remains true to the turn-of-the-century-Americana style, highlighted with wonderful French and Belgium accents. A trip to this secluded haven in the woods is truly a trip down memory lane.

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|  | 600 Blanco River Ranch Rd. home photo**Home ofDr. & Mrs. Alcides Cairus600 Blanco River Ranch Rd.**  |

One of the homes featured on the 2009 Heritage Tour of Homes belongs to Dr. Alcides and Darla Cairus and it is no less than spectacular. The home sits atop a large cliff overlooking the bluffs and river below above Five Mile Dam. It is grandiose in stature and seems to loom even larger as you discover the beautiful grounds of this estate. Dr. Cairus and his wife purchased the home in 2001 from the previous owners who constructed the home in the gated private community of Blanco River Ranch.

The couple wanted to make the house their own. Since purchasing the property, it has been a work in progress to make it the beauty it is today. The house has undergone extensive remodeling inside and out. There was no landscaping in place when the Cairus’ moved in and they have landscaped the entire estate themselves year by year. The grounds are now full of lush flowerbeds, terraced gardens, rock paths, English gardens, fountains, and places of reflection and prayer. The beauty of the landscaping is even more heightened by its views. The house has sweeping views of the river valley below. The property even has a beautifully shaded professional grade playscape area for their grandchildren and a decked walkway that winds down the cliff through the trees to the river below.

As you walk in the custom stained glass double front doors you are immediately taken by the grand scale of the home, with its 24-foot ceilings and 8-foot cool stone rock niches in the entry. It sets the tone for the rest of the home. The impressive entry makes way into the spacious living room with its large stone fireplace and beautiful hardwood floors. French doors lead out to the decks, which showcase the view. The dining room is formal and elegant, appointed with antique pieces from New Orleans and different locations throughout the South. The Louis the XIV style dining room table and large gold mirror are magnificent.

The kitchen is any cook’s dream and is beautifully done with ample space for entertaining. It boasts a brick oven surround, granite countertops, and French country cabinetry. There is also a large butler’s pantry and utility area that can be closed off, which also adds to the area for entertaining.

The master bedroom is fit for a king and queen and has original lithographs from the first world’s fair. The master bathroom has a marble tub and huge walk-in shower with cedar closets and dual vanities. The study also sits on the main floor adjacent to the master bedroom.

The staircase leading to the upstairs is elegant with its elaborate railing and grand scale. At the top of the stairs is a second living area used as a media room. French doors open to the veranda showcasing the views yet again. The upstairs also has 3 other spacious bedrooms and 2 full baths.

All the outside decking is Epea Brazilian hardwood which has the nickname ironwood as it is extremely strong and durable and resists almost all scratches and splintering. The decks wrap around the home and also make way to a spacious shaded barbeque area and a built-in hot tub area.

When the Cairus’ bought the home, the area underneath the house and support beams was all dirt. They remodeled to utilize every nook and cranny. The empty space under the house has been converted into vast amounts of storage space, poolside restroom facilities, and overhanging patio areas which provide shade. The outside decks also include guard railing with unique copper finials.

The pool in the back of the house, tiered with stone terraces and courtyards, overlooks the soaring hills and valley below. The water area is complete with two pools. A fountain area that also acts as a baby pool waterfalls into a larger pool down below which is decorated with dolphin tile insets.

Beside the main home is a second guesthouse that has a three-car garage on the bottom floor and a game room on the second floor, complete with full kitchen and bath. The second house also has a decked veranda from which to enjoy the sweeping views.

The home was recently featured in Million Dollar Homes in the Austin American Statesman and is currently on the market. The Heritage Association is very pleased to have it on the 2009 Tour of Homes.

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|  | 1127 W. San Antonio St. home photo**Owned byDanyel Austin & Dennis Glinn1127 W. San Antonio St.**  |

This year the Heritage Home Tour is pleased to count 1127 West San Antonio as one of its crowning jewels on the annual tour. The home is now owned by Danyel Austin and Dennis Glinn who are also the owners of Austin Home Works, a company who devotes itself to restoring historical properties back to their former glory and beauty. They purchased the home in 2004 and have been laboring ever since to bring the home back to its original splendor.

The home on San Antonio Street is thought to have been built sometime in the 1880’s due to the style and design. The first owners of the property as sited on the first handwritten deed known on record in 1881 are W.L. and Ann Pitts. It is recorded that it was located in part one, lot one, block one of the J.B. Wilson Track here in San Marcos. They had seven children and when they died they were buried in the Pitts family cemetery.

The next well documented owner known is Israel Donaldson who was one of the first elected lawmen in Kansas and also served in the legislature. Mr. Donaldson was also a colonel in the Civil War. When his family moved to San Marcos they were very involved in establishing the First Presbyterian Church.

During World War II the home was split into apartments because of the need of obtainable housing. The front porch was enclosed and trailer pads complete with septic facilities were added to the deep lot on the back of the property to house even more residents. The times were lean and any material that that was available was used. Many of the doors inside the home, when the current owners bought it, read officer and base on them. There was even an old air force officers’ jacket stuffed in the bracing acting as insulation in the front porch enclosure. The property is thought to originally be a one bedroom house.

The back of the house was all comprised of pieces of scrap materials. Danyel noted that there was not one stud on the back of the house when they purchased it. The house was owned by a Gloria Le Cruz who was elderly and had lived in the home for quite sometime. The house was slated to be sold and knocked down and redeveloped when Home Works got their hands on their newest restoration project.

Danyel and Dennis were set on returning the property to its condition in 1933. They did this by using one old photograph, faint paint lines, and tattered beams and columns. They spent years painstakingly following clues and hints found under faded wallpaper and rotted wood, like a map to discover and rebuild the treasure of this lovely tarnished gem. Nothing was put to waste almost everything was cleaned up and reused in another form or fashion.

The dynamic team of two removed and replaced all the interior exterior wood. All the insulation was replaced and improved. The electrical had to all be replaced and brought up to code. Seven to eight layers of paint were removed and hand scrapped. The striking mantle in the main parlor was stripped and restored. All fireplaces in the home were originally coal burning and were replaced with electric fireplaces to create ambience but also to be modernistic and functional. The main wall between the parlor and the kitchen was torn down to open up the floor plan and make the space appear open and airier. All of the ceilings were originally 8 feet but had fallen 3 feet during in its neglect. They raised all ceilings to 12 feet during the renovation.

The two chandeliers in the home came from the oldest crystal manufacturer in the world. The crystals used were the 2nd best ranked in the world at the time of their construction. They sent the chandeliers to an expert in the field and they were cleaned and checked and rewired for electrical soundness. One now hangs in the parlor and the other in the formal dining room. No detail was forgotten, the ceiling fans that they used are made from restored Hunter wooden fans that require periodic oiling. Many of the windows contain the original lead glass. All of the windows were stripped and totally rebuilt to function like new. Replica hardware was used to throughout the home including the door hinges and knobs. There is even a skeleton key that fits the replaced hardware that acts as a master key to the residence. The butcher block islands in the kitchen and in the washroom were made of long leaf pine that was harvested from the home.

All the bathrooms are adorned with hexagon and subway tile appropriate for the period of the home. The fixtures, sinks, and claw foot tub are also give way to the charm of the era. But they have also incorporated some luxury upgrades such as huge walk in showers with rain shower heads and a double sink vanity nestled in an antique piece with faucets flush mounted to the wall. The spacious master bedroom also boasts a huge “California closet style” walk in, lighted cabinetry, and receded lighting.

The team incorporated all the materials in the renovation to add character to the property. The pocket doors in the master bathroom and the laundry rooms are old doors from the shed found on the back of the house. The crown molding was completely hand fabricated to match the original crown molding found in the dining room and the parlor. The kitchen with lighted cabinets, pull out drawers, granite countertops, hand painted black and white checkerboard hardwood floors, and stainless appliances, can stand up to any new dream gourmet kitchen. The kitchen is also ornamented with a tin ceiling and large pantry.

The yard has also had an entire rehaul. All the landscaping was replaced with new sod, plants, and a sprinkler system. There are clean and inviting flower beds to welcome guests in the front of the house and an antique brick courtyard and fire pit in the back off of the large deck and pergola.

The main focus of Home Works was to restore a gorgeous old home using a contemporary vision using modern conveniences and old world charm, but staying within a historical context of the period. To say they hit it on the head would be a gross understatement. The home has been dusted off, polished, and brought back to the beauty of its youth. It is a testament to the power of hard work and the appreciation of fine craftsmanship. The amount of skill, detail, and talent that went into the property is astounding. The charm and character of the home at 1127 West San Antonio is unparallel and is the masterpiece of historical preservation in its truest form. The Heritage Association is so pleased to have such a restored jewel from the past on the 2009 Tour of Homes.

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| Merriman Cabin photo**Dr. Eli Merriman CabinVeramendi PlazaC.M. Allen Parkway**  |

Dr. Eli T. Merriman (1815 – 1867) constructed the original log cabin circa 1847 in San Marcos on a site where a Goodyear store was built in later years. The Cabin was one of the first cabins in San Marcos and Dr. Merriman was the first doctor in town. It was relocated to the Aquarina Springs Texanna Village tourist attraction, during the early 1960’s. After Texas State University acquired the Aquarina Springs property, the Heritage Association of San Marcos in conjunction with the City Parks and Recreation Department agreed to accept the cabin from the university for restoration and relocation to it’s present site at Veramendi Plaza. It was to be restored and used as a house museum similar to the Charles S. Cock House nearby, which was built in 1869.

The cabin was restored through fund raising events sponsored by The Heritage Association and other generous donations. Another piece of San Marcos had now been preserved for future generations. Donations are still needed to defray the expenses of maintaining this San Marcos treasure. The cabin is furnished with authentic period antique pieces to reflect its appearance during the 1847 – 1860 time period.

Dr. Merriman, according to “The Handbook Of Texas” and the Texas Historical Commission, was born in Bristol, Connecticut. His picture is displayed prominently in the cabin. He graduated from Yale University in 1833 and received his medical degree from Pennsylvania and Vermont Academy of Medicine. Dr. Merriman married Jenette Bartholomew also of Bristol. He opened his first practice in Bastrop, Texas sometime after 1938 and then in 1846 enlisted with Captain Henry E. McCulloch’s Ranger Company in which he served during the Mexican war. He moved to San Marcos in 1847 after he and the two other founding fathers, General Edward Burleson and William Lindsey, surveyor, bought and platted the town lots. Short afterwards around 1850 Dr. Merriman and his wife divorced. She returned with their six children to Connecticut. Then he moved to Brownsville and later to Banquette near Corpus Christi.

Dr. Merriman latter married his second wife, Elizabeth Fusselman with whom he had four sons. In 1857 – 58, he represented Cameron and Hidalgo Counties in the Seventh Texas Legislature. He also served in the Confederate Army as a doctor. One of his sons served in the Union Army and one in the Confederate. After the war he settled in Corpus Christi where he practiced during the yellow fever epidemic. He then fell victim to the disease and in 1867 was buried in Bayview Cemetery in the Corpus Christi. His son Eli T. Merriman Jr., later founded the Corpus Christi Caller newspaper and was a prominent citizen of the town.

The Heritage Association of San Marcos is proud to have a restoration of its founding past to share with the public for a better understanding of how San Marcos became what it is today. We can all more appreciate the present with a better understanding of our past.