



PHOTOS BY DANNY WARNER/SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

Steve Treviño's Alta Vista home is almost a century old but has belonged to just two families, cattle baroness Emma Shiner and then Treviño's parents. Everything in the living room is original and intact, Treviño says, including original light fixtures. An oil painting, 'Boots & Babes' by artist Jill Pankey, is from an Austin gallery and gives a brighter feel to the room.

TAKING IT BACK

Owner carefully restores home's original materials

BY CHRISSE MURNIN
SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

Restoring his family's Alta Vista home has been a labor of love for Steve Treviño. He recently completed painting the upstairs porch, the final project in a three-year renovation of the two-story brick house that was built for a cattle baroness nearly a century ago.

"It's something I wanted to do my entire life," Treviño says. "I saw the potential of the house. It was always decorated nicely, but as my mom got older and was living here alone, she wasn't able to keep up the house. It was way too much house for her."

The Treviño family became the second owners of the house in 1955. "My mom didn't want this house; she wanted a Tudor mansion that she saw elsewhere that had a bowling alley in the basement. She always



told the story that she slept on the couch and cried for two weeks because she did not want to move into this house," Treviño says, noting the irony that his mother, Soyla, always hated the house but spent the rest of her life in it.

As his mother was unable to keep up with maintenance, Treviño stepped in to oversee the work. "The day that they (workers) showed up to do the general contracting work for maintenance she fell ill and never moved back home.

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For more photos of the Steve Treviño home in Alta Vista

"During all of that I changed the scope of the renovation from a maintenance project to a refurbish. The house was actually vacant for three years, from the time she fell ill and we did all the renovation and I moved in.

"The main rooms of the house were 100 percent intact. Being the second owners of the house, we have all the original light fixtures, which are pretty phenomenal, and all of the original woodwork. All of this was untouched," he says about the elaborate woodwork in the entry living and dining rooms.

The first step in the renovation was ripping out the kitchen. Treviño recalls stand-

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ABOVE: The beadboard ceiling was restored by Mel Gutierrez, who stayed and continued to work on the house. Treviño installed the floor himself.

INSET: The dining room boasts an original stained glass window.



Original work restored in century-old home

CONTINUED FROM 10E

ing in the gutted kitchen, staring at the ceiling and commenting to a friend, "I wish I knew somebody who could restore the ceiling." At that moment Mel Gutierrez rang the doorbell.

Gutierrez, finishing a job at a nearby house, noticed work in progress at the Treviño house and inquired about a job. Treviño hired him to strip the kitchen's beadboard ceiling and stain it the original color.

"He did this incredible job. He ended up being like Murphy Brown's painter. From that point, he never moved out, he was here for about 16 or 18 months," Treviño notes.

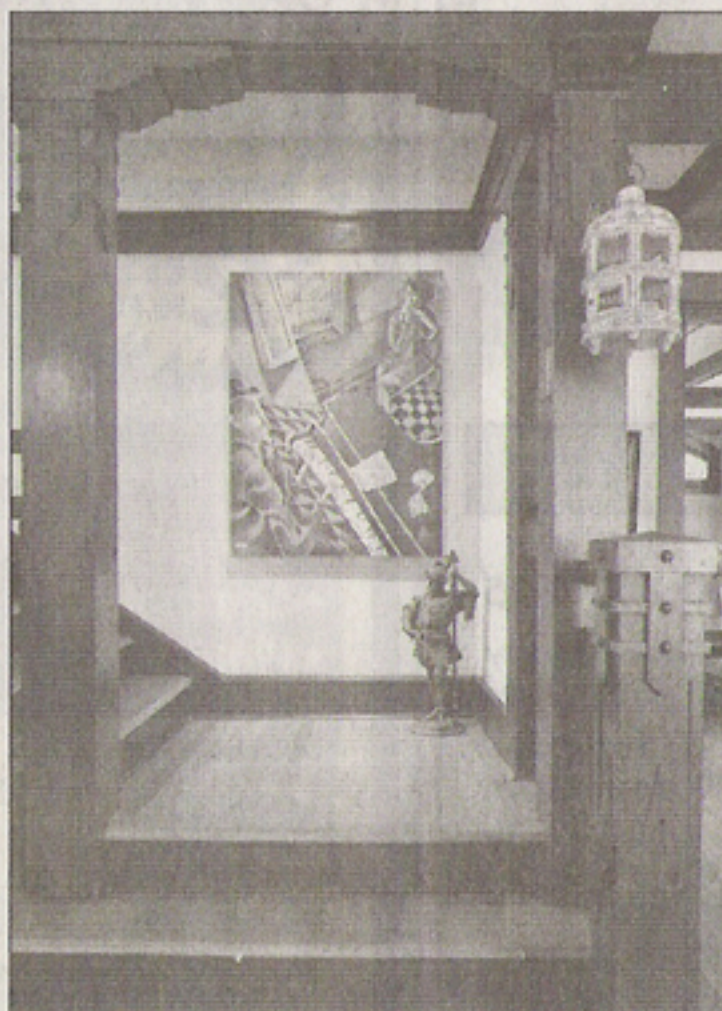
As Gutierrez completed one task he would tell Treviño what he could do next. He ended up hand oiling all the wood in three downstairs rooms and went to work on the staircase. He stripped upstairs doors, which had been painted white, and restored them to their natural color. "So the woodwork is just amazing in the house. It probably looks as good as the day she (original owner Emma Shiner) moved in," Treviño says.

Wanting to keep the look of the kitchen a century old and a glamorous version of the original, he selected honed granite for the countertops and 3-inch-by-6-inch white ceramic tiles with a crackle finish for wainscoting on the walls.

A designer at Lowe's helped with cabinet placement along two walls and a narrow niche in the kitchen that serves as a pantry. The top cabinets in the niche have new stained glass doors made by artisans at Cavallini Co., their design copied from the original window in the dining room.

The new floor also has a vintage look. "I wanted to replicate the hex tile that was on the front porch because that was original," he notes. Treviño, a commercial flooring sales manager, installed the black and white tiles himself, putting in 10-hour days during a week of vacation. It took five days of another vacation to install the tile on the floor of the back porch.

The kitchen opens to the enclosed back



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Steve Treviño left the pink ceramic birdcage that his mother, Soyla, hung years ago.

porch, which used to be the laundry room. Now it's a casual place to relax, full of light and plants and a sofa, love seat and rocker.

Treviño intended to do all the painting himself but decided to call in professionals to save time. "I'm glad I hired a painter because it took a crew of five guys four weeks to paint the house.

"This isn't my first choice of house, Arts and Crafts wouldn't have been my style. Mrs. Shiner mixed her styles," he says, noting the downstairs is arts and crafts-influenced but contains art nouveau and Victorian light fixtures.

"I think the house is so architecturally strong, that's why it's minimally furnished. There's just the art on the wall and not a lot of clutter because it can be dark and gloomy really quickly," he says.

"Everything in this room is original and

intact," he says in the living room, furnished with a couch and a settee arranged around a glass table displaying a Murano glass bowl, two chairs and a side table. The original light fixtures were removed during the renovation, cleaned, rewired and put back in place.

Treviño says the oil painting above the fireplace, "Boots & Babes" by artist Jill Pankey, brightens the mood of the house. He spotted the painting, of five women wearing colorful boots and laughing, while in an Austin gallery.

His very first piece of art was also found in Austin. The etched glass from a shower door in New York is framed and hangs in the dining room.

The 1930s Belgian dining room table came from Houston, when an art deco antiques dealer was going out of business. "The chairs are one of my bargain finds, I got them at an auction." He stripped them, had them refinished and selected a neutral-colored faux suede to replace the green Naugahyde.

Because he intended to install new floors in the main rooms of the house, Treviño did not protect the wooden floors during construction. They were scratched, scarred and missing splinters. Then, he got the name of craftsman Frank Rohr after seeing floors during an open house in the Jefferson area.

When Rohr looked at the battered floors, he told Treviño, "I can make this the most beautiful piece of furniture in your house." The floors glisten, from the vast entry to the bedrooms upstairs.

In the entry is a massive mirrored armoire Treviño found in Houston. The only piece of furniture original to the house, an ornately carved wooden chair left behind by Mrs. Shiner, is angled in a corner below a picture of Mary and Jesus.

One thing Treviño did not change was the pink ceramic birdcage his mother hung years ago at the base of the staircase.

"It has to go there, it's always been there," he says, noting it's a tribute to his mother, who died in March and never got to see the fabulous restoration of the Alta Vista treasure.