

HOUSTON house & home

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before

Gilbert Price and Nick Gooden enjoyed restoring the Florida Bungalow (above) in March. They started a new business venture, Bungalow Revival, to restore and to sell other bungalows in the Heights. For their first neighborhood visit and tour, added a green porch and a new side window and painted the exterior yellow. Getting the perfect shade of yellow a week, says Gilbert. He ordered a Western Williams color that had Crown Builder Supply duplicate the color in Bungalow Blue paint.

renovator-homeowner finishes out his own home while starting a company dedicated to restoring older houses



Gilbert finished the green porch with wood benches to lounge just up. He had used six pieces until he found the right place for them. To create their comfort and easy style, he had Cass' Vera paint and finish the pieces.

By Susan Fox • photography by Sarah Heenan

Gilbert Price started a little Houston nostalgia with a kitchen backdrop that's new as much as a conversation piece as it is a good-looking practicality. He had a conviction or plan in mind, but a trip to The Emporium provided the materials he needed. The architectural salvage company had rescued a number of 1920s-style mahogany blocks from the Gulf Publishing Building on Allen Parkway before it was razed a couple of years ago.

"It was a tragedy," he says, of the dismantling of the Gulf Publishing Building, one of Houston's last Art Deco landmarks. But the blocks were going to come down no matter

what, so at least he gave a few of them a good new home.

Being at the right place at the right time seems to work for Gilbert. But then again, anyone who knows him realizes he can't resist an antique store. His mother or anyone else that looks old instead of new.

Patience yields unexpected surprises, Gilbert believes. And that's his line up for those wanting something unusual, old or interesting for their homes. Of course, the more you stop and hunt in places, obscure or known, the more prolific the rewards.

As someone to that, he offers a way for just about everything in his 1920s home located in the Heights



Gilbert Perez and Nick Emschler enjoyed renovating their Heights bungalow (above) so much, they started a new business venture, *Bungalow Revival*, to renovate and re-sell other bungalows in the Heights. For their, they strengthened the roof line, added a generous porch and a new attic window, and painted the exterior yellow. Getting the perfect shade of yellow is tricky, says Gilbert. He selected a Sherwin Williams color but had *Gingco Builder Supply* duplicate the color in Benjamin Moore paint.

renovator-homeowner finishes out his own home while starting a company dedicated to restoring older houses



Gilbert furnished the screened porch with used furniture he bought years ago. He had moved the pieces until he found the right place for them. To create their carefree and easy style, he had Casa Vieja paint and distress the pieces.

by susan fox • photography by sarah heenan

Gilbert Perez missed a little Houston nostalgia by a kitchen backslash that's now as much of a conversation piece as it is a good-looking practicality. He hadn't envisioned or planned it, but a trip to The Emporium provided the materials he needed. The architectural salvage company had rescued a number of 1920s-style translucent blocks from the Gulf Publishing Building on Allen Parkway before it was razed a couple of years ago.

"It was a tragedy," he says, of the demolishing of the Gulf Publishing Building, one of Houston's best Art Deco landmarks. But the blocks were going to come down no matter

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Being at the right place at the right time seems to work for Gilbert. But then again, anyone who knows him realizes he can't resist an antique store, flea market or anyplace that hawks old instead of new.

Patience yields unexpected surprises, Gilbert believes. And that's his best tip for those wanting something unusual, old or interesting for their homes. Of course, the more you strip and hunt at places, obscure or known, the more prolific the rewards.

An testament to that, he offers a story for just about everything in his 1920s home located in the Houston



The screened porch is a favorite gathering place for family and friends.

Heights area—from the bookcase-turned-into-room-dividers, to the mantel and cabinets in his den, to the twin outdoor sconces lighting his home's entrance. The sconces—"perfect matches" he guesses—came from Pearl and New York flea markets. Who knew he'd find such rare matches so many miles apart?

Some of the things he carts home are rather unusual—like the brick block stacks typically placed underneath pier-and-beam Victorians and cottages. He admits not everyone shares his enthusiasm about some of his finds—like the old beadboard he took to his carpenter to use in the house he was renovating at the time. "The carpenter just laughed," says Gilbert. He just couldn't fathom why Gilbert would want to install something so old.

As a partner in a relatively new company, aptly called *Bungalow Revival*, Gilbert understands the carpenter's reaction. He gets it all the time, especially since Gilbert's company, which includes two other partners, is all about buying and renovating the homes of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "We're a society of new and clean," he says. "I think a house is alive, with a soul, and I want to fix it and nurse it back."

A contractor working on *Bungalow Revival*'s current project—a Victorian-folk home with a quaint gingerbread-topped porch—wanted to lay down new oak in the house. "I wanted him to take the red pine from the garage and piece it in the main house," says Gilbert.



This side view shows the screened porch and the open garage to the right.

Bungalow Wisdom—from Gilbert Perez

1. Don't try to put a "great room" in a bungalow. It'll rob it of its character.
2. You have the vision. Stick with your workers and be involved every step of the way.
3. Be patient and the right accessory or fixture or door will eventually come along.
4. If you're moving a house, be patient, patient, patient. There are always delays.
5. When moving a house, always tell the actual movers what's important to you about the house. When we told the movers we wanted the front porch protected, they ran the beams under the house accordingly.
6. Before a house is moved, remove light fixtures and anything that might break or is important to you.
7. Small is beautiful. The trend is toward larger and larger homes, but Houston's little bungalows are gems, and they deserve to be saved.

mixing business with pleasure



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Gilbert Perez and Nick Eronko enjoyed renovating their Heights bungalow (above) so much, they started a new business venture, Bungalow Revival, to renovate and re-sell other bungalows in the Heights. For theirs, they straightened the roof line, added a generous porch and a new attic window, and painted the exterior yellow. Getting the perfect shade of yellow is tricky, says Gilbert. He selected a Sherwin Williams color but had Grogan Builder Supply duplicate the color in Benjamin Moore paint.

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by susan fox • photography by sarah heenan

Gilbert Perez turned a little Houston nostalgia into a kitchen backsplash that's now as much of a conversation piece as it is a good-looking practicality. He hadn't envisioned or planned it, but a trip to The Emporium provided the materials he needed. The architectural salvage company had rescued a number of 1920s-style translucent blocks from the Gulf Publishing Building on Allen Parkway before it was razed a couple of years ago.

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- 5. When moving a house, always tell the actual movers what's important to you about the house.** When we told the movers we wanted the front porch protected, they ran the beams under the house accordingly.
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- 7. Small is beautiful.** The trend is toward larger and larger homes, but Houston's little bungalows are gems, and they deserve to be saved.

with pleasure



When Gilbert and Nick bought this house, it was in shambles. "It was unlivable," says Gilbert. In the process of their renovation project, they discovered an antique claw tub encased in fiberglass. They had the tub restored with the help of Galloway Porcelain Works and Heights Bright Metals.



Gilbert Perez with his dogs, Luna and Bella.



The partners of Bungalow Revival bought this house—their current project—as 14th Street in the Heights to renovate and sell it. The gingerbread trim is original in the house.



Gilbert found these cabinets and the mantel—all in one piece—at The Emporium. While installing them in the den that opens up to the kitchen, he decided to add storage space behind them. He just removes the books and other items inside the front part of the cabinets to reach the holiday decorations stored in the back.

"You have the vision," he says. "No matter how good the workers are you've got to stay on top of it." As a result of applying this work philosophy in his own home, he was able to turn what his carpenter deemed lost space in the kitchen into usable space, which now includes a wine rack, little junk drawers, a pull-out cutting board and a pull-out rack for cleansers.

He says he gets some of his space-saving ideas from visiting showrooms, like at Expo Design and Home Depot, and touring new homes during open house events. He then takes the ideas and massages them a bit to fit the older home's style.

While Gilbert and his Bungalow Revival partners are intent on keeping a bungalow a bungalow, they still incorporate

today's amenities. They just do it thoughtfully.

Gilbert's design sense tells him to be careful of trends. "When redoing a house, I visualize how it's going to look in ten years," he says. "I want to keep the house in character." While he wants to make the bungalow functional, he also says: "I want the rooms to be proportionate to the rest of the house. People try to create a great



Gilbert found the stained glass, which he placed in a den window, at PRD Antiques.



Gilbert noticed the carpenter was going to fill in this space with wood, but he suggested, instead, that it might be a great pullout drawer for cleansers.



The wood panels were removed from the set of French doors in the dining room, as well as other rooms, and replaced with glass to invite in more light.



Gilbert bought for \$5 apiece translucent glass blocks that once were in the former Gulf Publishing Building. He picked out 20 of the best looking—the ones with the fewest nicks—and constructed a backsplash that allows outside light to filter through.

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In his own home, he added some square footage to a room that opens into the kitchen. And in his living and dining rooms, he also opened up the space, but guests are unsuspecting of the changes. Period cabinetry, mantels and moldings in each of the areas keep guests guessing. "I

want people to wander through these houses and wonder if it's original or not," he says.

Gilbert and his partners have learned much from renovating past properties. And while he may be a romantic idealist, he doesn't object to moving a house to another property if it's necessary. In fact, in addition to the current Bungalow Revival project, he's been involved in the move of two

other properties.

Gilbert gives thoughtful consideration to moving houses, too. "You want it to look like it's always been there," he says. Most companies move homes at night. One move he scheduled was challenging and went into the week hours of the morning. At just about 3 a.m. a few years ago, Gilbert recalls the house moving company's supervisor sending a

worker out for detergent. It was going to be a necessary ingredient to slide the house into Gilbert's appointed slot. He had wanted the house to slide up to a tall leaning oak. Today, who would know the old house is new to the area? The tree looks like it leans because it grew to avoid the house. ■

For sources on Mixing Business with Pleasure, see Page 51.



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