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A Remodeling

REMODELING



Interior designer Gilbert Perez added a 27-foot-wide, eight-foot deep front porch to give the bungalow character and a friendlier façade.



BEFORE

# SALVAGING CHARM

BY AMY LAUGHINGHOUSE PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRAN BRENNAN PRODUCED BY SUSAN FOX

A dilapidated Texas bungalow gets an update with refreshed furnishings and recycled accents.

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**G**ilbert Perez has a theory. "I believe that an old house has a soul," the interior designer explains. "It's alive, and it speaks to you."

When he and Nick Eronko found a run-down 1912 bungalow in Houston, the home's message was clear. It was crying out for help.

The kitchen was encased in layers of tile and plaid wallpaper. Other rooms sported outdated paneling and worn carpeting. Chicken wire was nailed inside all the windows in place of burglar bars.

"The neighborhood was kind of rough," Gilbert admits, but several homes had been renovated nearby. Encouraged by the renaissance already underway—and smitten by the home's large lot, which featured a 150-year-old oak tree as its centerpiece—they bought the home with plans to fix it up and rent it.

Gilbert has a knack for imbuing battered old treasures with newfound function and style, and the >> on 63



"The idea of lounging on a sofa with a book and some wine and a breeze, that's my idea of relaxation," says Nick Eronko, who was particularly keen on adding this screened porch. The pair use it year-round, thanks to comfortable furnishings and an overhead fan to beat back the heat. Gilbert paid just \$100 for the cane pieces (right), which required refinishing. The table and two of the dining chairs (left) are vintage finds as well.



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The kitchen received an overhaul, with new cabinets made to match cabinetry in the adjacent den and a center island designed to accommodate a black marble top recycled from a coffee table. Stainless-steel appliances, a black ceiling and a backsplash made of salvaged glass blocks add contemporary drama.

Gilbert found the project so satisfying that he has begun renovating other homes through his new business, Bungalow Revival. "What is really nice is when people stop and say, 'We love what you're doing with the neighborhood,'" says Gilbert.

But it's not just the neighbors who are grateful. When asked what their house says to him now, Gilbert laughs. "It says, 'I love you! Thank you!'"

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In the den (above), Gilbert used a muted palette for the walls and fabrics. "It's just the art and stained glass that stands out," he says. A whimsical painting on cabinet doors over the fireplace (left) disguises the TV.