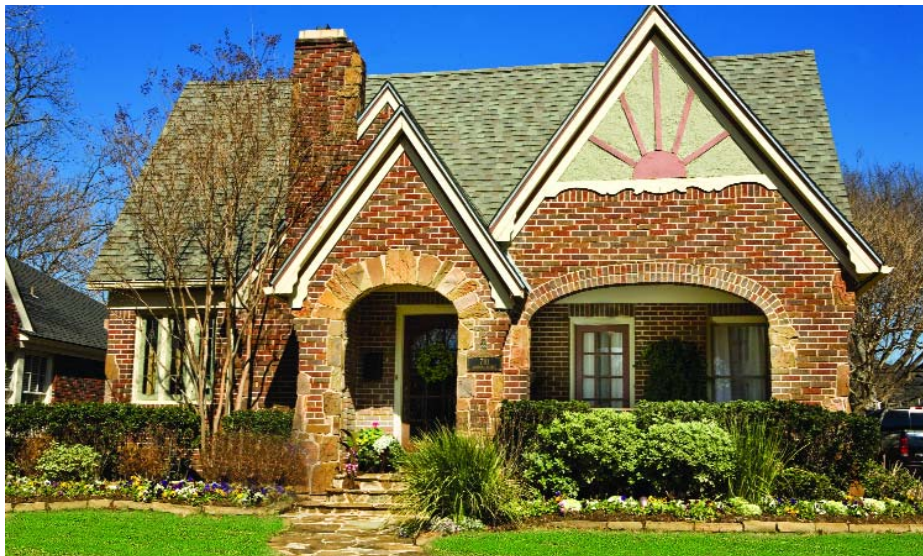


Story by **AMANDA FLATTEN** | Photography by **ROD CORDSEN**

AN ARTIST'S TOUCH

Renovating and restyling a Tudor in Hollywood Heights



Seven years ago, Glenn and Heather Comtois were getting frustrated with their home search. They found a few homes in Highland Park and Preston Hollow they liked, but nothing worked out. Then, they went to the open house of a 1932 Tudor-style home in the East Dallas neighborhood of Hollywood Heights and Heather knew on the spot it was the home she wanted.

ABOVE:

Part of the Hollywood/Santa Monica Neighborhood in East Dallas, the charm of this 1932 Tudor is captivating. The unique neighborhood offers one of the largest collections of stone-embellished Tudor cottages in the country.

“I think it’s true that you walk into a house and you know ‘this is it,’” says Heather, a district manager for The Gap. “I liked the charm of the house and the neighborhood. When I saw this home, I loved the layout, the original features and the stained glass.”

Over the next several years, the couple made the home their own, painting rooms and remodeling the guest bath and kitchen themselves.



ABOVE:
In the dining room, the table is a showstopper. Homeowner Glenn Comtois, an architect and artist, made the table base of more than 400 plywood pieces in a torus pattern. The tabletop is stained concrete. The chandelier is from Lamps Plus.

An architect by trade and an artist by passion, Glenn's art and custom furniture pieces are showcased throughout the home.

HISTORIC ROOTS

In the 1920s, J.B. Salmon acquired a former dairy farm and formed the Hollywood Company to subdivide and improve the land. Also known as the developer of Kessler Park in Oak Cliff, Salmon invited other developers to build homes in the neighborhood in diverse styles including the predominant Tudor Cottage style, as well as Spanish Eclectic, French Eclectic, Minimal Traditional and Craftsman. To this day, the Hollywood/Santa Monica neighborhood (with 700 homes) is one of the largest collections of stone-embellished Tudor cottages in the nation.

The Comtois' home has an interesting history. The first family owned the home for more than 30 years. After the war, the home was turned into a quadplex and rooms were rented to soldiers. Later, the home was turned into a duplex. Then, in the 1970s, an architect moved in and converted the house back into a single-family home. *(Continued on Page 32)*

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MAJOR PROJECTS

When Heather and Glenn purchased the house, it was in pretty good shape for a home that had seen so many changes. “At first, we just did cosmetic changes like painting and adding crown molding to the rooms,” Glenn says.

The first major project was redoing the guest bathroom. “We gutted it but kept everything in its original place,” Glenn says.

The couple purchased a new sink and retiled the floor in a black and white pattern. They also added wainscoting, as was in the original bathroom. “We really wanted the bathroom to fit the time period of the house, so I think the tile and the fixtures do that,” Heather adds.

Renovating the kitchen was the second major project and took the couple about five months to complete. Previously, the kitchen had cookies and cream Corian countertops, green walls and dated appliances. Always entertaining friends, the couple wanted to create an open, inviting space. They took out the breakfast nook and walls and widened the opening between the dining room and kitchen. Now, you can see all the way from the kitchen in the back of the house to the living room in the front of the house.

(Continued on Page 34)

ABOVE AND OPPOSITE:

Various custom touches in the living room include a slate basket-weave finish on the fireplace and a floating bookshelf reminiscent of a Piet Mondrian painting, both created by Glenn. The banana leaf chair is from Z Gallery. The mid-century modern-style chair, passed down from Heather’s grandparents, has been re-covered in cowhide.



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“Our concept was to recapture the time period of the home in the kitchen,” explains Glenn, adding that in the '30s, when people moved out of a home, they often took their work tables with them when they left. “We wanted our kitchen to have furniture pieces; everything is freestanding,” he adds.

The pantry was built to look like an armoire and also holds the microwave. Cedar siding commonly used to line closets was placed on the ceiling. Cable lights are suspended across the room. The hutch and worktable are from Voyager Trading Co., and the cabinets were designed by Alcla Furniture Design. Both Glenn and Heather love Santa Fe, N.M., so they brought warm colors indicative of the region into the kitchen, including gold walls and chili pepper red window treatments.

A raised countertop at the back of the kitchen creates a bar space that cleverly hides the washer and dryer unit tucked behind sliding pocket doors. “You get very creative with space in a small house,” Heather says.

Another special project in the house was the fireplace in the living room. Surrounded by red brick that had been painted white in the 1980s, Glenn covered it with a scratch plaster coat and then added slate in a basket-weave pattern. *(Continued on Page 36)*

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Shades of sunny yellow fill the guest bathroom. The homeowners completely renovated this space, retiling the floor, replacing the sink and adding wainscoting, an original feature that had been removed by previous owners.

BELOW:

Widening the opening between the kitchen and dining room opened up the entire space. Now, the home offers a view from the kitchen in the back of the house all the way to the living room in the front of the house. “We love experiencing rooms through other rooms,” Glenn says.





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EXPRESSION THROUGH ART

An architect for 18 years, Glenn says his true passion is creating art and he hopes to make it 100 percent of his business in the future. “My art is based on my experience in architecture,” he says. “My contemporary artwork is based on architecture, mathematics and geometry, and I translate that into my work with forms and shapes.”

Glenn started creating art for his home as a creative outlet. “A lot of my earlier pieces are re-masters,” he says. “I started looking at paintings of old masters, such as Picasso, and tried to re-create them using plywood and paint.”

Then, about 4 years ago, Glenn was commissioned by Neiman Marcus to create artwork displays for its stores nationwide. Glenn also creates pieces for private commissions.

Every room in the house features Glenn’s work. In the living room, three Picasso re-masters grace the walls as soon as you enter the front door. He also created a floating shelving unit, reminiscent of a Piet Mondrian painting.

A showpiece in the dining room is an intricately crafted dining table. Glenn made the base out of about 400 plywood pieces formed into a torus pattern. The tabletop is stained concrete. *(Continued on Page 38)*

ABOVE:

It took Heather and Glenn five months to completely renovate their kitchen. The cabinets are by Aicla Furniture Design, and the worktable and hutch are from Voyager Trading Co. Cedar siding was placed on the ceiling to add interest and make the room warm and cozy.

OPPOSITE PAGE:

Because the homeowners spend a lot of time with friends outdoors, they added a second deck to the back yard last summer, offering different spaces for guests to congregate. The garage/studio also was reshingled to make it look like a quaint cottage.



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CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY

While Heather and Glenn both love their house, they thought they would stay about 5 years and then move on. Now that they've been part of the neighborhood for 7 years, they have no desire to move.

"We thoroughly enjoy this neighborhood," Heather says. "There is an incredible community spirit here."

In fact, Heather is on the board for the neighborhood and helps plan parades and parties throughout the year. "Everyone is committed to preserving the neighborhood and making it better," she says.

Neighborhood newcomers are greeted with a welcome basket. "There are so many things in this neighborhood you can be a part of," Heather says. "We try to create a smaller town feeling."

Heather is also on the Hollywood/Santa Monica Neighborhood Association home tour committee, which produces an annual home tour and fundraiser. This year, the home tour begins Friday, April 25, starting with a candlelight tour followed by a live auction and fundraising party at the Dallas Arboretum. The tour continues Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, April 27 from 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. (www.hsmna.org).

"I don't think we could find another neighborhood like this," Glenn says.

Heather couldn't agree more, adding "All of the closest friends we have today are people we met in the neighborhood."

BELOW:

The master bedroom is filled with natural light. Bedding is from Peacock Alley. Glenn's re-masters of Picasso's Bullfighter series hang above the dresser.





ABOVE:

The couple's dogs, Tucker, a 14-year-old cocker spaniel and Chopper, a 4-year-old terrier mix, take full advantage of the quaint back yard. The deck off the kitchen is a great place to entertain guests. "We entertain a lot in spring, summer and fall," Heather says. "We open up the whole house and back yard."

RIGHT:

The garage was converted into Glenn's art studio. An architect and artist, Glenn creates artwork for Neiman Marcus and private commissions.

