

A fantastick set-up

Fate brought this neighborhood couple to each other and to their home

IN THE CLASSIC MUSICAL *The Fantasticks*, two fathers maneuver their son and daughter to fall in love. East Dallas homeowners Heather and Glenn Comtois swear the same thing happened to them.

“They still say we weren’t set up, but we were,” laughs Glenn. “My dad worked with her dad in the same data communications business for, say, about 30 years. So my parents decide one night, ‘let’s go over to see Tim and Elizabeth’ — who are Heather’s parents. And just as we get to their door, my mother says ‘Oh, Heather’s going to be here.’ Now I didn’t know much about Heather or whether she was even five [years old] or what.”

Turned out Heather was a lovely 20-something and Glenn admits: “I fell in love as soon as I saw her.”

To avoid family pressure, the couple kept their dating something of a secret at first. But when they got around to telling everyone they were in love, they found out the family had already been mapping out the wedding. Today they’ve been husband and wife for eight years, and their newly remod-

eled home in the Hollywood/Santa Monica Conservation District will be featured on the neighborhood’s April 24-25 historic home tour.

The ’30s Tudor-style bungalow has

been meticulously renewed, but the Comtoises had some distinct advantages going into the project. Glenn is an architect (Heather is district manager

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Furniture-style cabinetry and a cherry plank ceiling anchor this one-of-kind kitchen with art gallery wire-track lighting, brick backsplashes and Italian marble countertops.



TOP Homeowners Glenn and Heather Comtois have the rare ability to work together on a remodeling project and love it. They painted the colorful living room, filled with Glenn’s old masters reproductions, five times before they agreed it was right. LEFT The massive concrete-topped dining table is another Comtois original. ABOVE Glenn’s rendition of a pen & ink bullfighter series by Picasso provides a focal point for the neutral, soothing tones of the master bedroom.

13th Annual Hollywood/Santa Monica Home Tour

when Saturday & Sunday, April 24-25, noon-6 p.m.

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for The Gap), and the couple had already cut their remodeling teeth on a “completely gutted” ’50s house in Lake Highlands before discovering this home.

Glenn says: “Back in the early ’90s, I lived in some apartments near here, and I used to walk this neighborhood and thought these houses were really neat. Then Heather’s brother and sister-in-law bought over here on Vivian about five years ago.”

“So we came to visit,” Heather says. “And we’d actually decided on (moving to) a different area. But then we fell in love with this house.”

Remodeling began immediately, primarily for the home’s interior, as luck would have it, since exterior alterations can be a very tricky business in a conservation district. Glenn recalls: “I knew how involved the neighbors here are. The first weekend we moved in, I was putting our satellite dish on the garage and this lady came down the driveway with a camera in her hand and I thought, ‘Oh no, I’m in trouble — I’m doing it wrong.’”

And then it turned out that she just wanted to tell me she was born in this house and all about the neighbors and the history over the years. I was very relieved.”

“And it was so interesting,” Heather says.

The Comtois’ visitor told them all about the post WWII days when her parents had to turn the house into a duplex and wall off rooms for tenants. At one time three rooms were rented out to workers who would catch the trolley on Lindsley down to work at the plant on Interstate 30. Then in the ’80s, it was restored to a single family home.

Now in the spring of 2004, the old jewel sparkles again and hundreds of neighbors will be flocking through to view the young couple’s handiwork.

“I was nervous at first, but now I’m as excited as Glenn,” Heather says. “We want to be involved in the community, and this is a great way to meet everyone.”

Glenn adds: “We love this neighborhood. It’s a perfect fit for us.” *

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