

Blue Ridge Peaks™

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**CRAFT GALLERIES
WITH STYLE
SEVEN SISTERS
AND GROVEWOOD**

WILDERNESS EXCURSIONS

SPANISH-STYLE DREAM HOUSE

DAY TRIPS TO DILLSBORO AND BLOWING ROCK

LEAF-LOOKERS' GUIDE

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The first mistress of this Spanish-style house was Cuban.

The room now serves as an informal gathering area for listening to music, watching television and relaxing. Cherished family photographs share shelf space with books and mementos.

The addition of shelves in the front room enabled them to create a walk-in closet in the central downstairs bedroom, with which the front room shares a wall. All closets are cedar-lined and original to the house.

The kitchen was gutted in 1990 and entirely revamped. It now contains a large cooking/eating island complete with comfortable yellow-tinted bar stools so guests can keep company with the cook. A cabinet discreetly closets a microwave oven and television for further kitchen comfort.

A stately carved cabinet reaching nearly to the ceiling houses the china, the Villeroy and Boch "Basket" pattern, around which the kitchen's yellow and green color scheme was chosen. The cabinet, originally a wardrobe, was purchased at a barn sale in Candler.

The home has proven to be a decorator's dream for Mrs. Nilsson. While she insists the home has been difficult to furnish, her careful selection and placement of each piece of furniture gives the impression it was all custom-made for the house.

"I guess you could say the furnishings have a Provençal note — kind of French-, English-, American-style," she said.

Mrs. Nilsson chose each piece, right down to the tabletop figurines, to enhance the home's unique style. As an interior designer, her business requires her to attend estate and other

furniture auctions and be familiar with furniture and accessory manufacturers and suppliers. This insider's knowledge and access provided her the opportunity to obtain even the most hard-to-find pieces for her home. Some of the furnishings have been used in rooms she designed for Asheville Art Museum designer showhouses.

The Nilssons' massive rosewood dining room table, which was made in Mexico, was purchased from an estate in Biltmore Forest. A sturdy chandelier bought at a local auction hangs above. The south-of-the-border flavor of these furnishings echo the home's exterior style. A Welsh dresser, a new piece made from old wood, was specifically selected for the dining room and ordered from England. It provides the perfect backdrop for the couple's delicate blue and white porcelain pieces.

The rich wood of the furnishings is enhanced by the brilliance of the heavy polished wooden doors in each room. The Nilssons said the doors were a selling point when they viewed the house.

A favorite room for the Nilssons is the sunny, yellow floral wallpapered breakfast room just off the kitchen. An oblong table purchased at a local estate sale is the crowning touch to the cheery space.

The expansive living room seems made for entertaining. A grand piano located next to the fireplace awaits playing, and a bright floral print sofa and chairs invite guests to relax and bask in the room's ambiance.



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The Nilssons gutted the kitchen three years ago to make way for a cooking/eating island that enables guests to keep company with the cook.

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The result is a 2,800-square-foot Spanish-style house that stands elegantly among the smaller homes in the quiet, middle-class neighborhood.

While researching the history of the house, Nilsson learned that it was built in 1921 by the owner of a concrete plant. The man's wife was a native of Cuba, and in an effort to make her as comfortable as possible the home was designed to favor the houses of her native country.

The exterior is cement stucco over wire and all walls are wood frame. The interior wall finish is cement stucco over wood framing with a rough textured finish.

The Nilssons spent three months on renovations prior to moving in.

Old aluminum awnings and storm windows were removed and chipped and peeling paint was sandblasted and replaced. Inside, wallpaper was removed and walls were patched and painted. The fireplace was sandblasted to expose the original stonework.

Carpet was pulled up to expose now-gleaming oak flooring. In the kitchen, breakfast area and rear-entry room, the removal of layers of linoleum, underlayment and building paper also exposed original oak floors.

The existing oil-fired steam heat was replaced with a natural gas-fired forced air furnace and insulation was added to the attic.

The Nilssons have made few material changes to the house. They added bookshelves to the cozy forest green front room, closing in a closet door.

Photography By Jetta Fraser

Spanish Influence

By Keith Jarrett

Seven years ago, contractor and engineer Jonathan Nilsson and his wife Susan — an interior designer — decided to trade in condominium living for a freestanding home of their own. They embarked on a search to find a spacious house within their budget.

After searching south, east and north, the couple finally found what they had been looking for in west Asheville: an established area primarily comprised of smaller, post World War II homes. They saw potential in the home and knew their combined talents could help transform their purchase into a grand showplace.

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Whimsical rabbits, left, on the Nilsson's rosewood dining room table. Floral fabrics, above, add warmth to the living room.