

# SHADY AVE

Celebrating

25 YEARS

Highlighting the News and Lifestyles of Pittsburgh's East End, Fox Chapel and Oakmont

FALL 2021

## OUR ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Highlighting 25 Special Places in Our Area as We Celebrate 25 Years

## ON COURSE WITH A NEW CENTER

The New Arnold Palmer Learning Center

## WESTINGHOUSE PARK

Efforts to Revitalize This Historic Green Space

# THE Art AND Craft OF A Mishmash

ERIC FLINT'S POINT BREEZE HOME COMBINES ARCHITECTURAL STYLES IN EYE-CATCHING FASHION.

BY NANCY POLINSKY JOHNSON

Eric Flint's Point Breeze home, circa 1900, reflects a mixture of styles common for its day. Just ask architect Gerald "Jerry" Lee Morosco.

"This is a real mishmash," he says. "With these late-19th-century, early-20th-century houses, because they were ordered out of catalogues by builders, they're often a mishmash of styles," he says, using that word again. "You could have some that are more Arts and Crafts, some that are colonial revival."

According to Morosco, the exterior of the Flint house is "Queen Anne light." The inside, which he was instrumental in overhauling, he describes as, "not really Arts and Crafts, but we hit that note."



**Above:** The Point Breeze home of Eric Flint features an exterior with Queen Anne architectural elements.

OPPOSITE PAGE

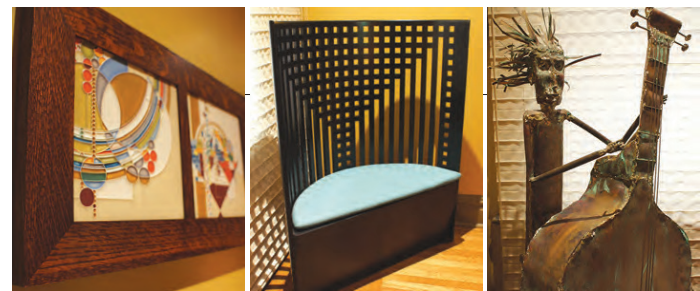
**Top:** Following the living room renovation, a redesigned fireplace gives an Arts and Crafts-style focus to the space. The light fixtures flanking the mirror are reproductions of original Frank Lloyd Wright fixtures made for the Frederick C. Robie House in Chicago.

**Left:** The intricate woodwork and stained glass window on the staircase are original to the house.

**Center:** Contemporary living room furnishings complement the Victorian architectural details around them.

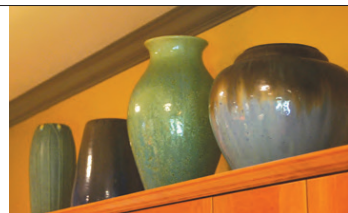
**Right:** This almost-sculptural floor lamp is a Frank Lloyd Wright design, created for his own home, Taliesin, in Spring Green, Wisconsin.





Three handcrafted tile art pieces, gifts from Flint's mother, hang in the dining room. A reproduction of Charles Rennie Mackintosh's noted Willow Chair sits in a corner of the room. A sculpture of a jazz bassist, purchased by Flint in New Orleans, reflects his love of jazz.

# THE Art AND Craft OF A Mishmash



Eric Flint's collection of Fulper early Arts and Crafts pottery is displayed on top of kitchen cabinets.



A Frank Lloyd Wright-designed dining room set from Weisshouse sits atop a rug from O'Bannon Oriental Carpets in the dining room.



Arts and Crafts-style cabinetry and stainless steel appliances from Don's Appliances are highlighted by a bold tile backsplash in the kitchen.

It was through friends that Flint became a fan of the simplicity and craftsmanship of the Art and Crafts movement that became popular in America in the 1890s. "Their whole house was done in that style, and I liked it," he says. Those same friends and their house also influenced Morosco, who had apprenticed at the Frank Lloyd Wright School of Architecture at Taliesen.

"I came out of Taliesen. I knew Frank Lloyd Wright, which is just one line in that [Arts and Crafts] lineage," says Morosco, who then offers a brief tutorial. "Contemporary to Wright, Gustav Stickley, Elbert Hubbard—there were all these people working in this direction of trying to create something that did not have its basis or roots in the classical architecture of Europe. That was the Arts and

Crafts movement, and that was early 20th century, until the Lusitania sunk, which had Elbert Hubbard on it. And then World War I comes along, and it just sort of disappears." Morosco credits Barbra Streisand with jump-starting the Arts and Crafts revival of the past 30 years or so. "In the 1970s, it starts trickling back in, and then [in 1988], infamously, Barbra Streisand buys a Gustav

Stickley sideboard for some ridiculous amount of money, and boom..." he trails off. Through their mutual friends, Morosco and Flint became acquainted, and when Flint decided that he was ready to renovate his home, he called on the East Liberty-based architect. "I was looking for a place of tranquility and harmony. So, I asked Jerry to help me with that," he recalls. Over the past 15 years, project by project, the two have worked together to renovate almost the entire house. "He's a really great client, in that he's not going to do something that he doesn't want to do, but he has a lot of faith and confidence in me," says Morosco. "At this point he'll say, 'Well, you haven't steered me wrong, I'm just going to follow your direction, and I'm sure I'll love it.'" Flint definitely likes the calming gold tone that covers most of the walls in the house. "I was very happy to have it," he says. "That's Morosco gold; it's one of his signature colors." Morosco laughs when he hears that, noting that it's actually a Benjamin Moore paint color called Bryant Gold. He says he initially began using that brand of paint specifically because it originally didn't use names, only numbers. "I

# THE Art AND Craft OF A Mishmash



**Above:** In the primary bedroom, a turret adds an unusual dimension to the room, while a stainless steel fireplace brings a touch of masculinity. **Top right:** A former bedroom makes a spacious dressing room with lots of built-in cabinetry for clothing. **Bottom right:** An inset panel built into the upstairs hallway sets off a piece of art. The sconces flanking it are reproductions of ones designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.



Sawn balusters that form the railing around the back porch reflect the Queen Anne style of the exterior of the house.

think the name prejudices a client's opinion of the color," he explains. "When they hear the name, they think, 'Ohhh, Buttercup... Ahhh, Azure Sky.' But if it's just a number, like HC7..." he again trails off.

The house is filled with Arts and Crafts-style furnishings, but not exclusively. "Eric had all the furniture already," says Morosco. "Good design is good design, so you can put diverse elements together that are of a different design and create a harmonious composition out of that." Arts and Crafts elements that Morosco added, from custom cabinetry in the kitchen and dining room to reproductions of Frank Lloyd Wright light fixtures, make a big impact. Thanks to the decision to remove a wall and open up the kitchen to the dining room, the first floor offers a welcoming flow. "I wanted it open. I prefer an open floor plan," says Flint. "If you have people here, you can converse with them in the kitchen."

On the second floor, even more walls were knocked down to create a bedroom suite for Flint that includes a spacious closet and dressing room plus a sleek bathroom. "I hate to use the term man cave," says Morosco. "But it's a very masculine space, especially the fireplace." The renovation work extends to the back of the house, where Morosco expanded Flint's small back deck to create a deep porch under an awning, a perfect spot for outdoor dining. Flint then enhanced his landscaping by adding a pond with a small cascading waterfall. "It's nice to sit back here and listen to it," he says. "It's calming."

Unlike his interior surroundings, the porch that Flint sits on as he enjoys the sound of the water is decidedly Queen Anne in its design, as Morosco felt it was important to maintain the exterior style of the house. He did, however, add some light fixtures that are slightly "Arts and Craftsque," as he describes them. The house, after all, is a mishmash. SA