

Historically speaking

THE KRINSLEY'S
1910 OXNARD CRAFTSMAN *is anything but a museum*

BY MICHELLE VOLKMAN | PHOTOS BY STEPHEN SCHAFER



"This is it."

Morgana Krinsley spoke those words as she peered in the window of a 1910-built Craftsman-style bungalow. Starting with the push-button light switches down to the hardwood floors, the house reminded this native Californian of her childhood home in Santa Barbara. Morgana knew, in a way that can't be explained, that this Oxnard house was her home.

In December 1997, Brian and Morgana Krinsley weren't planning to buy a house. They only looked at this E Street residence because, for the price, they thought "something must be terribly wrong with it." Instead, they discovered a beautiful home in need of their attention and love.

Cosmetically, the five-bedroom, two-bath bungalow was attractive. But its core

— water pipes, electrical wires, heating vents and roof shingles — required major upgrades. They tackled the first chore, getting heat in the house. A plumber was called to replace the 88-year-old pipes after Brian saw red-brownish water dripping from the shower head. They had lived there a month when water burst through a ceiling light bulb to flood the front room.

This house had stood the test of time, through earthquakes and hungry termites. Surely it could endure a year of self-improvement.

"It was so beautiful. We knew it needed some work, but it was beautiful," Morgana said.

True to the Craftsman spirit, their home isn't stuffy or formal. The interior is a decorative weave of antiques, from those with personal histories, such as Brian's



Brian and Morgana Krinsley in front of their Oxnard home.

grandmother's lamp, to a silver tea set purchased during a vacation to England. Yet the sofa is new.

"Sometimes people who own Craftsman houses like to have everything in their house to be Craftsman antique or reproduction," Morgana said. "I didn't want to live in a museum, something that is a time warp. I wanted something that reflected our tastes and had a historic feel, but didn't necessarily reproduce a look ... I want to have nice things, but I don't want to live in a home where you can't put your feet up on the furniture," she said.

They estimated two-thirds of the "bones" of the house are intact. Nearly all of the windows still have the original glass, but screens were added to keep modern-day bugs out. Unfortunately, at one point, the house was repossessed by a bank. At that time, it was stripped of anything valuable, including the 16 globe light fixtures and porch swing.

In contrast to Victorian homes, the Craftsman houses focused on an efficient floor plan. The front door opens directly into the living room, so that the living room is an extension of the porch. Rich woven rugs lie like puddles on one half of the room. Sunlight pours through the square windows on each side of the room. The openness and lack of a television invites guests to sit down and converse about the day's happenings. Lying back on the sofa, it is easy to imagine families discussing politics or gossiping about the neighbors in the 1920s.

Dark wood columns serve as a partial division, naturally leading into the adjoining dining room, which is anchored by a 1925 table while a built-in hatch draws attention to the trinkets tucked behind glass doors. A built-in sideboard hugs the length of one wall and provides a permanent entertainment bar. It is a signature piece left from the house's builder, a saloon owner.

From here, three separate dining room doors take guests in different directions. Through a swinging door, is a remodeled kitchen and a den that was added in 1972. Behind the original rolling pocket door is the hallway leading to a bathroom and bedroom. The final door presents slightly curved stairs leading to a second story, which was added at some point during the first 15 years of the house's history.

The master bedroom, with separate his and her closets, is a spacious, open room. The closet's sun glass handles have a hint of purple due to years of sunlight exposure. The abundance of closets and built-in bookshelves makes this home practical as well as historical.

The main improvements have been finished for eight years now, but this house is a work in progress for Brian and Morgana. They have an ongoing list of improvements for "some day."

"I like to preserve the integrity of the house," Morgana said. "I'm always moving toward perfection. I'm always looking for the next thing for the house." ❧