



*Love (& Home)...*  
At First Sight



## Historic Prescott cottage transformed from cute and fun to calm, relaxed, and spacious

By Hilary Dartt • Photos by Bella Vita Photography



Phyllis Carpenter was ready for a change. After living in her historic cottage on Mt. Vernon Avenue in Prescott for 13 years, it was time for something new ... an open floor plan, soothing décor, and more space for entertaining.

At the end of 2015, she hired Christie and Robert Board with Board by Board Construction, and, she said, they “literally blew my socks off.”

Christie is a Certified Kitchen Designer and a Certified Bathroom Designer—the only one in the quad-city area and Robert is a General contractor with more than 27 years in the construction industry.

Christie described Phyllis’s 1,700-square-foot home as “very Mary Englebreit,” and photos taken before the remodel show bright colors, whimsical figurines and several “collections” Phyllis had curated over the years.

“I’m kind of a collector,” Phyllis said, and Christie said that although the home was “cuter than cute,” she added, “there was a lot going on. It was very busy.”

In 2002, Phyllis, then a Phoenix resident, was visiting Prescott when she spotted a home for sale on her favorite street—Mt. Vernon Avenue.

With a white wrought iron fence, a covered front porch, and a huge, ivy-covered pine tree in the front yard, the house is charming at first sight.

Phyllis called the real estate agent, who said she could see the home, which was built in 1902 and is on the National Register of Historic Places, if she was available in five minutes.

She made it happen, and, she said, “The wheels started turning.”

The home’s 600-square-foot guesthouse was perfect for her mother, who lived in Payson at the time, and Phyllis’s high school best friend lived in town, too.

“When I bought the house,” Phyllis said, “it was completely white. The walls were white. Someone had even painted the Formica countertops white.”

*“With everything we did,  
we kept in mind that it’s  
a one hundred-year-  
old house. We added  
modern construction  
but wanted everything  
to have the appropriate  
finishes.”*

*- Christie Board*





Over the years, Phyllis added her own touches, creating “a very eclectic feel.”

In 2004, she married Lou LaScala, and together the couple has five adult children and thirteen grandchildren.

At one point, Phyllis saw an article about one of Christie’s designs in Prescott Woman Magazine, and, knowing she wanted to remodel eventually, saved it. After meeting Christie, she knew she didn’t want to work with anyone else.

“What I got from Phyllis was that she wanted something calm, peaceful, and open,” Christie said.

Using creams and beiges, Christie said, allowed texture to be part of the pattern and smaller items like throw pillows and accent pieces to bring in pops of color, mainly in blues and golds. They were able to use some of Phyllis’s existing furniture pieces and bring in some new ones.

The Boards got to work, swapping the existing, smaller dining room for the larger guest room so that the kitchen now flows into the spacious dining room and TV room. They widened the opening between the main living room and the TV room.

They built bookcases into the columns that separate the TV room from the dining room, and Phyllis said, those shelves look like they’ve always been there.

Phyllis explained that the new floor plan just makes sense. The dining room can now accommodate 12 people, comfortably ... a necessity for a large extended family.

While the Boards were able to keep the home’s original hardwood flooring throughout much of the house, they added additional, matching hardwood flooring throughout, and area rugs to soften the living areas.



"The kitchen was completely redone," Phyllis said.

With white and gray granite countertops and vanilla-colored cabinets, the kitchen is serene and functional. Christie designed a curved bar at one end, and added a standing "mudroom," a pantry, and a hutch for storage.

Phyllis pointed out that the kitchen's island, the mudroom, the pantry, and the hutch each feature a different colored wood—gray, black, light, and dark, respectively. Each one looks like a unique piece of furniture, adding interest.

"This area was so cluttered before," Phyllis said. "Now each room flows into the other much better."

From the kitchen, Phyllis and Lou enter their bedroom through an office area. The Boards made the most of the office space, building an L-shaped desk and a built-in bulletin board, as well as shelving to accommodate the computer, printer and files.

With a little space planning, Christie and Robert were able to widen the hallway between the office area and the master bedroom, and add a walk-in closet. For a door, they repurposed one of the house's original doors, and created a barn-style slider to save space and add a little charm.

Having previously made do with a small slider closet and a few hanging spaces, Phyllis said, the walk-in closet has been an exciting addition (and an excellent use of space).

The remodel took about four and-a-half months to complete.

In the end, Phyllis said, it was all worth it. It's now the perfect place to return to after her busy days. She's retired, but still owns Tri-City Property Management Services, Inc., an HOA management company that just opened a Prescott office, and is a member of two book clubs. She also hikes, practices yoga, golfs, travels, and is very involved in her church, Solid Rock Christian Fellowship.

Lou jokes that the two of them



introduce themselves to one another every Tuesday when they finally see each other again. In reality, though, their newly remodeled home provides exactly the relaxing, calming atmosphere for which they hoped.

"Robert said his mother taught him to leave things better than he found them," Phyllis said. "And they had some really cool ideas."

For example, they suggested Phyllis and Lou create a time capsule and write some of their favorite Bible verses on the studs as the house was under construction.

"Christie and Robert worked well together," Phyllis said. "They seemed to interpret my vision right on the money, in terms of colors, feel, everything about the house. We were very in sync."

Christie said she really enjoyed changing the house so drastically—while striving to ensure it doesn't look like it's been remodeled.

With Mt. Vernon being the best-known street in Prescott, lined with "darling houses that are 100 years old," Christie said, the challenge for this project was in making sure every part of the remodel seemed like it belonged in the house.

That being said...

*"It's amazing what a simple change can do in a house."*

