

# A Country House Fit for an Artist

Some houses, filled with art and collections of antiques, are as stuffy as a museum. But you would be wrong if you assumed that this describes the home of collector and artist Sandi Wickersham Resnick and her husband, Ron.

Their Loudoun County, Va., home is as cheerful and warm as a sunny day in spring. And that's because of the couple's numerous folk art collections and Sandi's own colorful primitive paintings.

"Some old houses are dark and dreary," Sandi says, wrinkling her nose in distaste. "This home suits our lifestyle. It's big and airy."

Not that the 1923 Georgian stone house was always as sunny as it is now. When Sandi and Ron moved in, they yanked up the ugly wall-to-wall dark carpet to unveil wooden flooring, which they sanded and polished to a warm golden glow.

So far, so good. But when they pulled up the linoleum in the kitchen, the Resnicks discovered that the finish of the hardwood flooring underneath was beyond rejuvenation.

No problem. Sandi used her artistic skills to create a handsome new floor. First, she had it painted white. Then, she made up a marbled pattern at the last minute.

To further create the light-hearted effect the Resnicks wanted, they removed dark-varnished pine boards and dark print wallpaper from the walls.

"We made the colors more neutral to highlight our collections," Sandi explains. Freshly painted molding and the lightened walls also made a perfect backdrop for Sandi's vibrant paintings.

The exuberant self-taught artist uses acrylic paints to depict rich country scenes that have such titles as "The Day of the Quilt Show," "Fourth of July at Peppermint Point," and "Beauty and the Beach."

Although Ron, who is in real estate, shares Sandi's love for antiques and collecting, he leaves the decorating decisions for their home to her artistic eye.

"I have to make sure I turn on the

light when I enter a room because, so many times, when I go to sit down, the sofa has been moved," Ron quips with a grin.

The Resnicks tried to do most of the work themselves when they redid their home. "The challenge is in doing it, not having it done," Sandi says. And, although she is too modest to say it, Sandi's artistic spontaneity is unlikely to be duplicated in a work-for-hire situation.

Take the historical oak-leaf stencil pattern she painted as a border in the dining room. "I did it upside down because the leaves looked happier that way," the folk artist admits. She grins and adds gleefully, "Hey, that's the way leaves *should* be growing.

Not all of her decorative choices are as fanciful, but most have a similarly colorful history behind them. For the furniture in the study, Sandi chose a red, grey, and black fabric pattern resembling an old Beacon camp blanket.

"Beacon blankets originally were made by the white man to trade to the Indians for jewelry," Sandi says.



The Resnicks' Georgian stone home was built in 1923. PHOTOS: GARY CLARK



The kitchen floor, formerly covered by linoleum, now boasts a marbled, painted pattern that Sandi designed.







*(Left) Cheerful blues and reds in the living room pick up the bright colors Sandi Wickersham Resnick used in her sunny paintings above and beside the fireplace. Old quilts are a special collecting passion.*

*(Left, below) A quilt-bedecked daybed, handmade rustic willow pieces, and tab curtains made from old ticking give this setting its relaxed air. The copper-roofed log cabin is part of Sandi's house collection.*



"They were done in an Indian motif to appeal to that audience."

Almost any decorative accent in the Resnick home has an equally interesting anecdote. Ask Sandi about the blue-and-white quilt draped over the denim-clad sofa in the living room, and her eyes will light up. She loves to tell how orphans made the quilt sometime between 1910 and 1923, using the blue cloth from their nurses' uniforms.

"It's interesting to look at the quilting on this one because you can tell it was made by children," she adds, brushing a hand gently over the stitches.

Delightful bits of history like these come as easily to Sandi as cold, hard facts do to a museum guide. The difference is that you still don't know much about the museum guide at the end of the museum tour. But the cheerful, playful outlook of Sandi Wickersham Resnick, collector and artist, clearly shines through her warm Virginia home.

By NANCY DORMAN-HICKSON



*(Above) Self-taught primitive artist Sandi delights in painting amusing old-fashioned scenes.*

*(Left) Ron and Sandi's impromptu backyard picnic draws compliments from (seated, left to right) guests Michelle Campbell, Eva Wickersham, Sandi's Mom, and Sharon Brophy.*