

## Home & Garden

### *Bill & Stancy Gullung's Home*

A canopy of Bradford Pear trees shades the boulevard-like drive leading to the graceful house of Bill & Stancy Gullung. Entering the home you are welcomed by the heart of the home - Stancy Gullung. It's easy to see where the home gets its good cheer and charm.

A beautiful antique table adorned with a sculpture of a loving couple (the only two antiques in the house picked out by Dr. Gullung) also greets you as you come into the home. A Brunswick & Fils wallpaper with swans reminiscent of Josephine's symbol draws your attention to the portraits of Napoleon and Josephine (part of the first of Stancy's many collections that we'll see) sitting on the table in the corner of the foyer. Collections of cloisonné, nautilus shells, and antique tortoise shell and mother-

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of-pearl cases are expertly set on two different tables in the foyer.

Moving to the right of the foyer you come into the music room. A magnificent golden Lyon & Healy Grand Concert harp, a troubador harp and a black ebony grand piano are played by all the children in the room that lives up to its name in grand style. In American Federal period homes (late 18th to mid-19th century), music played a great part in their lives. It's only fitting that the room is furnished with a Federal era sofa and a matching table (placed on the other side of the room), American (1840-1860) end tables and an American painting (circa 1897).

If you divert your gaze upward you'll see a stunning painting of the sky with four cherubs (representing Bill & Stancy's four children). Patricia Burns of Finishing Touches by Elizabeth painstakingly created

the beautiful scene on the ceiling. By giving each cherub an item, the children's interests were identified as well. The son has a bow and arrow (hunting), one daughter holding two masks (acting), one daughter has a harp (music) and one daughter has a love bird (love of animals).

One item that caught my eye was a hope chest found in the corner of the room. Stancy told me that she has given each daughter her own hope chest at age sixteen. This chest was custom made with a design of inlaid brass found on the top and the sides. The hope chest will be filled with linens, mementos, and silver and so on until the youngest Gullung daughter marries.

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The hope chest is just one of the wonderful, old traditions that the Gullung family still practice. Another tradition is Stancy's annual mother-daughter Christmas tea party. This means dressing to the hilt complete with hats and gloves. This brings me to another item we found in the room, a dressed up doll that Stancy says jokingly represents what she and her friends will look like in their later years. (If you ever meet Stancy, you realize this will never be true.) So, we decided to set up our own tea party using the doll and the somewhat unwilling family dog, Pierre.

Leaving our little tea party we cross the foyer to the formal dining room. An attractively laid out table bedecked with stylish table settings welcomes us as we enter the room. A Duncan Phyfe style table complemented with elegant chairs forms the stylish platform for Stancy's Spode tableware and naturally shed antler cutlery.

There are many items in the house that have been handed down to Stancy by her grandmother, great-aunt or mother. Stancy was fortunate that she was one of only two granddaughters, therefore inheriting many

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of her grandmother's furnishings. A stunning punch bowl from Stancy's grandmother sits atop the sideboard balanced on either side by silver chalices (late 1700's to the 1800's) originally from Catholic churches in Europe. Sterling silver candelabras, also from her grandmother, complete the top of the sideboard. Above the sideboard is a painting depicting the Scottish countryside, one of many paintings in the house that reflect Stancy's Scottish heritage.

The breakfront sitting behind the dining room table and housing crystal and china given to Stancy by her mother was actually designed by Stancy. She hired a Hattiesburg craftsman, Patrick Bond, to custom build the unique design. The breakfront rounds out the classically furnished room.

As you move through the house to the den, you find two worlds colliding. As Stancy relayed, "I consider my house to always be a work in progress. With four children and one grandchild, I am constantly working to change the rooms to meet the needs of our family."

In one corner of the den there's Dr. Gullung's desire for a Caribbean cabana style room, in the other corner stands Stancy's desire for a more traditional look.

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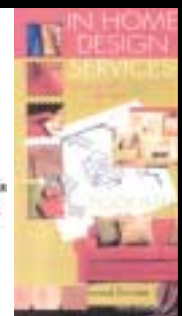
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So, they compromised: the room is slowly becoming more traditional. Stancy's grandfather once used the crossed fencing foils found on the wall. A Culloden Scottish battle sword and a Japanese Katana sword fill out the sword display. The antique swords and traditional drapes form a counterpoint to the very Caribbean pickled finish bookcase currently anchored on one of the den's walls. Another painting depicting a Scottish scene is further evidence of a room in transition.

As you turn from the den you face a wall in the breakfast nook that is covered with yet another of Stancy's collections. Blue and white dishes cover the wall. Both Stancy's and Bill's favorite color is blue so it's appropriate they have such a wonderful assortment of blue and white dishes. Blue Willow, Flow Blue, French, Dutch, English, Chinese dishes have all made their way to this wall. You can choose to be awed by the dazzling collection of dishes or the dramatic view of the lake as you eat.

Going down the hall to the guest bathroom we hit on a real gem. What began as a bathroom remodel that started to go wrong ended up



being a real eye-catcher. Stancy decided to float the new sheetrock on the bathroom ceiling herself. Somehow she never quite reached the desired professional finish. So, making lemonade out of lemons with some aid from *Finishing Touches* by Elizabeth, Stancy came up with a delicately woven fabric that drapes from the ceiling that looks like it was always meant to be but also hides some remodeling miscues. A 24K gold leaf sink under mounted in the granite vanity along with the brass fixtures and an 1880's French mirror finishes off the room in grand style.

When our photographer first came into Bill and Stancy's master bedroom on the second floor, she actually gasped. Remember when I was talking about surprises? Two astonishing stained glass windows flank the beautiful four-poster bed. Stancy found the stained glass windows on the world-famous Portobello Road in London.

There are hundreds and hundreds of chapels in England, many times serving as family churches for the landed gentry. These chapels would fall into disrepair as family fortunes waned so the windows, ornaments, silver and furnishings became available for sale. It's sad to think that this can happen but it's nice to think some of these treasures have ended up in a family that appreciates history as much as the Gullings.

The stained glass windows are not the only pieces of history

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in the bedroom. An antique prie-dieu, a wooden table used for praying while kneeling, can be found next to the bed. An 1840's painting of Cupid hovers over the head of the bed. Stancy found the painting stuck behind a bunch of junk at a flea market in Mobile. Originally the painting was marred by a bullet hole through the heart of the Cupid depicted. There has to be a story there but I'll leave that to your imagination. Eventually the Gullungs had the painting repaired by a New Orleans firm.

When asked how she shopped for antiques Stancy replied, "I take antiquing as a challenge. I only buy what I like and I need to find the deal. If I can't get what I want at my

price I don't take it home." Stancy regularly takes road trips with her friends antiquing as they go. From what I've seen, Stancy must be a real good negotiator.

At this point there is another collection to marvel at. Stancy has accumulated an amazing array of tiaras and she uses all of them except for the tiara once used by a Chinese concubine. Stancy hired a local jeweler to create the prettiest tiara in the collection. Using a Chaumet (a French jewelry maker which made all the coronation jewelry for Napoleon & Josephine) style as a model, the jeweler assembled this stunning piece of jewelry from diamonds that Stancy provided. What makes this tiara even more unique is that some of diamonds have come from jewelry given to Stancy by spe-



cial members of her family. That tiara has been worn by various brides in several family weddings and by Stancy at many a fine party.

Down the hall from the master bedroom is the Indiana Jones' room (er, I mean the son's bedroom). By using leopard pattern wallpaper on three of the walls along with a suede fabric on the wall behind the headboard Stancy and her interior decorator, Patricia Burns, achieve a real Indiana Jones look. A snake (not alive) poised on

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the bed, an Indiana Jones movie poster and a whip and fedora (put up for safekeeping since the son went to college) would have made the young man feel as though he, and not Harrison Ford, was the real star of this show.

To make room for the tester bed, the canopy had to be removed to fit the 9-foot ceiling. This 1840's era bed came right out of the Mississippi plantation culture via a plantation in Louisiana. When you wake up in this room you must really be looking forward to your next adventure.

Walking down the hall is one of the daughters' bedrooms. Again you will have no doubt as to the gender of the occupant when you walk into this room. Matching fabric for the bed covers, pillow shams and the crowns above the beds, complements the beautiful toile wallpaper. Patricia Burns of Finishing Touches by Elizabeth again came to the rescue by building the crowns with a special type of bendable plywood and by finding the fabric to match the wallpaper. The balcony outside the bedroom overlooking the lake makes this stunning room even more attractive.

Walking back down the hallway is the youngest daughter's room. Four generations have slept in this Victorian Eastlake bedroom set. The cheerful, romantic Chintz fabric of the bed coverings and draperies match the Victorian style paper on the wall. The silver and crystal hair and beauty paraphernalia on top of the dressing table once belonged to the daughter's great great-aunt.

As we make our way back through the house and review what we've just been privileged to see, it is easy to understand why the Gullungs love their house so much. The Gullung's house really personifies the interests and history of the entire Gullung family. Stancy Gullung did a masterful job in putting everything together to create a classic home design.



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