

# Edmond Monthly

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## The Knox Home

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- Cascata: A Review
- WWII Posters at the Edmond Historical Society Museum



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*Vivid rugs underfoot and antique wooden beams overhead*

## The Knox Home

### *Hip, Mellow and Full of Art*

By Christine Dillon  
Photographs by Keith Rinearson

Spending an afternoon with Renee Knox in her home is like taking a mini vacation to a strange, Santa Fe-Edmond hybrid. Her husband, Steve, Renee and Lily, their 14-year-old daughter, have lived in their semi-secluded home in the middle of town for nine years. Steve's son Austin is 22, and an architecture student. Much like the rest of their lives, the way the family acquired the home was serendipitous.

"We were at the lake one Labor Day, and the people in the next house had their granddaughter with them, and our daughter Lily was playing with them. We chatted, you know, and realized we were both from Edmond, and later that fall, they had their granddaughter over again, and she came over to play with Lily at our house. Patty, the girl's grandmother, loved our house, and when I went to hers I loved it. So we traded!"

As the families moved into their respective new homes, fierce bartering ensued. Commodities like barstools were exchanged for pot racks. The Knoxes' Santa Fe style and Southwestern furnishings were perfect for the new home's stucco-clad living spaces, whereas Patty's antiques were perfect for the Knoxes' former home with its wood floors and molding. The interior and



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*A view of one of the living areas from up in the loft/playroom*

exterior of the house are somewhat incongruous, which adds to its charm. The French lines outside belie its cool, contemporary interior.

Throughout the place, great art occupies walls and shelves, and beautiful rugs top tiled floors. There's a huge, fifteen-foot island in the kitchen, serving as storage space, a seating area and gathering spot for guests. "This is a real casual house," said Renee. "It's a great house for entertaining, and we all end up in the kitchen. Dinner parties are interactive here, with everyone chopping and cooking and talking. We prefer dining here to going out because here we can control the food and the music!"

The pair was fortunate and did not have to remodel much when they moved in, except the kitchen. "There used to be black and white tile in here, and there was a walled off breakfast room. We opened it up and eliminated all of the upper cabinets." Tumbled marble and Biblical stone mosaic were used to enliven the space.

Steve and Renee own a pair of tile galleries, Steve Knox Galleries, with one in Edmond and one in Kansas City. The galleries are hard to describe because

*Under the stairs is a bishop's chair crafted by First Circle's John Chapline, and the coffee table can accommodate three dancing people, according to Renee. The wolf watches over all of it.*

and all the work that goes into running a household to deal with, Renee confesses to fantasies of running away and starting a Sheltie farm or learning how to sew. "I can't imagine having free time. We are working toward it."

There are lots of things to look at and enjoy throughout the home. The stair rail came from the old First Baptist Church in downtown Oklahoma City. Doors are from Architectural Antiques. In the center of the combined living room/dining room/den there is a fireplace that has three mouths opening into three spaces. There's another fireplace in the master suite.

The home's previous occupants spent an entire year remodeling, and added the interior stucco, the fabulous rock floor and the antique wood beams overhead on the ceilings. A wall of glass brick in the dining room contains a built-in ledge for placing, in this case, lovely antique stained glass windows. The dining table is massive, with simple, inviting lines. It sits atop



*The dining room's purple wall serves as an anchor for one of the couple's magnificent paintings.*

one of many intricate rugs scattered among the rooms. A purple wall in the dining room serves as a huge frame for a painting, by Harold Deist, of a landscape and vivid desert sunset.

Art is important to Steve and Renee. "We have quite a bit of art from Santa Fe," explained Renee. "Steve's art educational background makes art very important to him, as does my inherent physiology! We buy pieces that mean something to us. Steve likes unusual stuff. We'd rather have very little furniture and really great art than great furniture and nothing on the walls."

A semi-primitive painting of a wolf is a great example of art shopping, Knox-style. "We saw this wolf in Santa Fe two

years ago," she began. "He was painted by Carole Laroche, and he was hanging in a restaurant. I loved him from the minute I saw him, so we asked how much he was. The painting was more than I wanted to spend that trip, so we left him there. But we never stopped thinking about him.

"We went back, and went to the restaurant to see him again, so we could see if we *really* loved him or if we'd just built him up in our minds. But he was gone. So we went to the Carole Laroche Gallery and there he was. She said she'd just taken him out of the restaurant. We loved the painting, just as much as we had before; it was still just as powerful, so we bought it and now he lives here!"

Fostering a love of art in others is something both Steve and Renee enjoy. Another artist whose work they are particularly fond of is Dick Evans.



*The kitchen, with its fifteen foot island, is perfect for entertaining guests over a relaxed dinner.*



*In the master suite, Renee hides out amid stacks of books. These days she's reading Hunter S. Thompson.*

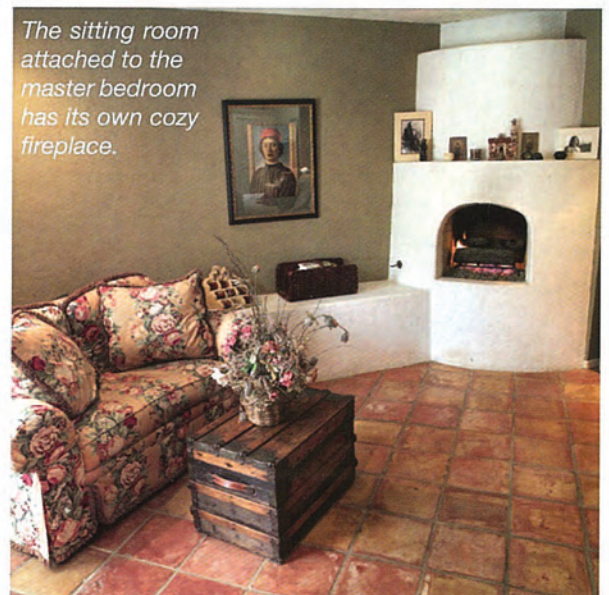
She and Steve have been married since December of 1987, but have known one another since Renee was 19. She was working for Steve's father, but the pair didn't start dating for five or six years. "We were best friends before we started dating. We hung out as friends for a long time. We'd go to the movies, but as friends, and I'd try to fix him up with girls. Then one day he kissed me, and it was like, *oh!*" He told Renee he was going to marry her to which she replied, "No you're not," but eighteen months later he did, and now they are "basically

They recently hosted an evening with the abstract artist to benefit Edmond's Fine Arts Institute. "He came and we bought two pieces, and our friends bought, and it was great fun. Dick Evans is as quiet as his art is loud," she laughed, adding that Evans' wife is the talker of the two. Jamie Wyeth as another favorite artist, and there are a number of Steve Knox originals in the house.

Serendipity played a part in bringing the many lovely rugs into the home. "I was driving through the Village one day, and I saw this man unloading these rugs from a U-haul. I slammed on the brakes and said, 'What's the deal

with the rugs?'" The man, it turned out, was bringing rugs to a number of importers in the city, and agreed to sell Renee three of them right there on the street! Many of the others were found in (you guessed it) Santa Fe. Renee's a quick study, and true to form, has figured out the rug business. She let us in on the fact that, just like carpet, rugs are priced by the square foot and thus their prices are easily negotiated.

the same person," she said. "Steve's mild mannered and quiet, and I'm not, but we're the same but with different packages." ✦



*The sitting room attached to the master bedroom has its own cozy fireplace.*