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SECTION HO

SATURDAY, 3.16.2013

THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC

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ENCANTO'S  
*'WHITE  
DOVE'*

Ryan and Julie Oberholtzer bought this 1927 Spanish Colonial Revival in Phoenix's Encanto-Palmcroft Historic District in 2011 and then gutted and remodeled it.

## WELL-TRAVELED FAMILY RESTORES HOME TO ORIGINAL BEAUTY

By Kara G. Morrison  
The Republic | [azcentral.com](http://azcentral.com)

Two years ago, Ryan and Julie Oberholtzer took eight months off to travel the globe with their twin daughters.

When they landed back in the States, they settled in Phoenix to be near family. And there was only one neighborhood they considered for house-hunting: the Encanto-Palmcroft Historic District.

After traveling to more than 30 countries, they wanted a home with character and history.

"We knew we wanted a house that had many families and lives," says Ryan Oberholtzer, 41, who acknowledges he also saw this particular house in the well-manicured neighborhood as another adventure.

The 1927 Spanish Colonial Revival had been sitting vacant with antiquated knob-and-tube wiring and original plumbing that needed to be replaced. A strange, covered pool in the backyard would have to go; a new air-conditioning system was

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White pedestal sinks, cabinetry and tiles brighten the upstairs bathroom (center), while exposed-beam ceilings and dark wood floors add rustic touches in the master bedroom.

PHOTOS BY TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

## ENCANTO-PALMCROFT HOME TOUR

**What:** A tour of 10 homes from the 1920s to 1940s, plus a street fair featuring entertainment, arts and crafts, and food vendors.

**When:** 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday, March 24.

**Where:** Ticket sales and parking are in the Phoenix College parking lot on the northeastern corner of 15th Avenue and Thomas Road. Shuttle buses will transport ticket holders to the homes. The neighborhood will be closed to traffic; no street parking will be available.

**Tickets:** \$20 during the tour or \$18 online; age 12 and younger are free when accompanied by a ticket-holding adult.

**Details:** [encantopalmcroft.org](http://encantopalmcroft.org).

**“** We're thankful for how bad the house looked. This thing was a serious eyesore. ”

**RYAN OBERHOLTZER**

On the condition of the house, which he says probably kept other buyers away

# Encanto

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needed. All those details, he thinks, intimidated buyers.

"We're thankful for how bad the house looked," he says, adding someone might have snapped it up had it been in better condition. "This thing was a serious eyesore."

Julie Oberholtzer, 40, understood that her husband — who had sold the family private-security business before their overseas adventure — needed this challenge. But it still made her shudder.

"He keeps things interesting, but I keep him in check," she says. "I just kept thinking, 'Money pit, money pit!'"

It helped that the Oberholtzers, both University of Arizona graduates, knew someone in the construction business. Ryan Oberholtzer asked his college friend, Mike Murphy of Tiara Sun Development, to take on the project.

They paid \$337,500 for the home and spent nearly as much on the renovations, which took six months. In April, they moved in. The house is one of 10 being featured on the Encanto-Palmcroft Historic Home tour on Sunday, March 24.

The Oberholtzers were adamant about returning the home



The home has two courtyards. The one in the back features a brick patio in a herringbone pattern, a modern fire pit and patio furniture. The area leads to the backyard, which has a covered dining area.

to its former glory, keeping historical touches whenever possible. Today, it's a modern, comfortable family home with global flair.

The main staircase, for example, had been carpeted, painted and stained over the years. They sandblasted the white wrought-iron railing and kept sanding through layers of paint and stain to restore the original wood stairs. Ryan Oberholtzer then faced each step with Mexican tile in a different pattern, as it would have been applied in the 1920s.

"I learned a tremendous

amount doing this," he says. "I helped run the wires. I learned how to tile. I think the adventure part of it was very cathartic for me."

They also outfitted the house with 1920s light fixtures or '20s-style reproductions in their original locations. One such chandelier greets visitors in the entryway, and period wall sconces create focal points throughout the house.

The Oberholtzers also splurged on reproduction "button" light switches to mirror what the first occupants would have used. (The new button



A claw-foot bathtub is the centerpiece of the master bathroom.



The Oberholtzers raised ceilings, added exposed wood beams and decorated with items from their world travels.

PHOTOS BY TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

switches, however, can be turned to dim the lights).

They also raised the ceilings, added exposed wooden beams and ripped out walls to make the home more open. They stained the peachy Saltillo tile in the dining and living rooms darker and repainted the pink exterior that had inspired their daughter Riley's nickname for the house: Pinky.

Today, their neighbors say the home looks more like it did

when it was nicknamed the "white dove" of Encanto-Palmcroft.

The Oberholtzers give their draftsman, Hector Medina, a lot of credit for envisioning the final look. Medina, who told them the house reminded him of his grandmother's Mexican hacienda, proposed adding a master suite that opens onto the back courtyard and feels original.

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## Encanto

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In the kitchen, the Oberholtzers started from scratch. They designed the galley kitchen around an Aga range from England, made to look vintage. From there, they added custom ivory cabinetry, a marble backsplash and dark granite countertops in a matte-leather finish. An exposed brick wall and exposed duct work (painted black) in the kitchen add a rustic-modern note.

Upstairs, they created a haven for their 14-year-old daughters, Riley and Morgan, who share a bathroom and a large closet but have separate bedrooms. The remodeled bathroom features two pedestal sinks and built-in drawers for storage. A frosted-glass sliding door separates the sinks from the shower and toilet.

After spending months abroad, carrying only backpacks and volunteering in places where people had few material possessions, Julie Oberholtzer says it seems antithetical to end up in a large home. On the other hand, she jokes, it's nice to have some distance from one another.

"The (back) courtyard is my favorite," she says. "It reminds me of places we traveled to."

Two courtyards play a big part in the home's design. The large, front courtyard features a foun-



The family started from scratch in designing the galley kitchen. They chose custom ivory cabinetry, marble backsplashes and dark granite countertops to give it a rustic-modern feel. An oversize clock on an old brick wall hints of an earlier period. PHOTOS BY TOM TINGLE/THE REPUBLIC

tain surrounded by red Adirondack chairs, a fireplace and a built-in padded bench. The back courtyard features a brick patio in a herringbone pattern and a modern fire pit. It leads to the backyard, which has a covered dining area.

The home is filled with reminders of the Oberholtzers' travels. The living-room coffee table is

made of carved wood from India. The walls feature artwork from Australia, Mexico and Bhutan. Rugs from Kashmir and India grace the dining room and office. The downstairs powder room also features a marble vessel sink from India, a storage-chest-turned-vanity-cabinet from Bali and patterned cement tile from Mexico.

Before the renovation was finished, Ryan Oberholtzer opened the door to a very tall man. The man was Alvan Adams, a celebrated basketball player for the Phoenix Suns from 1975 to 1988, who had lived in the home in the mid-1970s and wanted to reminisce.

Oberholtzer says three other



Ryan and Julie Oberholtzer — with daughters Morgan (left) and Riley and dogs Lincoln (standing) and Luke — wanted a home with history.



Intricate tile work adds an artistic accent over the vintage-style stove.

former occupants have stopped by, sharing their stories and memories. It's exactly what the Oberholtzers had hoped for, living in a historic home. And they're glad to be adding their own story.

Reach the reporter at [kara.morrison@arizonarepublic.com](mailto:kara.morrison@arizonarepublic.com) or 602-444-4857.