



RESTORING HOMES: Gilbert Perez shows off two bungalows he restored on 14th Street. He is renovating his seventh bungalow in the Heights. **DAVE ROSSMAN** / FOR THE CHRONICLE

Heights resident respecting the past

■ Gilbert Perez renovates homes in hoping to retain neighborhood's character

By **JENNIFER FRIEDBERG**
CHRONICLE CORRESPONDENT

WHERE many people may envision a teardown home, Gilbert Joseph Perez sees opportunity.

An interior designer by trade, Perez decided to completely renovate his own home in the Heights several years ago and it became a side business — although it is quickly becoming his main enterprise called Bungalow Revival.

"I redid my house inside and out and had a lot of people loving what I did," he said.

The company was officially founded in 2003. Perez is working on renovating his seventh bungalow in the Heights. Of those renovations, he has sold three, lives in one, one is for his mother and one he leases.

His homes have been featured in several of the area home tours.

"Until recently, I've only done one per year because I do them like they were for

"At a time when we are losing 2.4 houses a week to the bulldozers, Gilbert (Perez) is actually breathing new life into our bungalows."

—**JANICE EVANS**
Houston Heights Association

me and I take my time," he said.

But having recently added staff, Perez said he wants to start working on as many as six homes each year.

"I want to still be able to give the personal touches I put into them. I don't want them to be like tract homes," he said.

Janice Evans of the Houston Heights Association said she appreciates companies such as Bungalow Revival for what they do to maintain the neighborhood's character.

"At a time when we are losing 2.4 houses a week to the bulldozers, Gilbert is actually breathing new life into our bungalows," Evans said.

To start with, Perez looks for an old bungalow he can afford. He either works on it

where it is, or moves it to a better location. He will then design the floor plan and landscaping.

"With today's demands, people want a little more square footage, so I usually double them in size," he said. "I try to go back or to the side and keep it as original looking as possible. The goal is to keep you guessing as to what is original and what is not."

Perez will use antique hardware and lighting fixtures with modern appliances.

"When we redo the house, all the plumbing and electricity is redone," he said. "I try to keep the period of the home with things like period-friendly tiles on the countertops."

Perez also aims to maintain the old doors and windows where possible, or replace them with antiques that blend with the home.

Perez said he has found a true passion. "I love interior design, but I find I'm getting more and more into the restoration and renovation of homes. I'm getting a lot of praise from the neighbors," he said. "I feel like I'm doing something right — like I'm doing something I'm supposed to be doing. Maybe it's my calling."

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RUFFING IT
■ "Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog, it's too dark to read."
— Groucho Marx (1890-1977)

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MY FAVORITE ROOM



BRUCE BENNETT PHOTOS FOR THE CHRONICLE

AIRY ADDITION: The screened-in porch Nick Eronko and Gilbert Perez added to their 1912 Craftsman bungalow in 2001 reflects the laid-back spirit of bygone days.

A Heights porch invites quiet, even if it's fleeting

Living breezy & easy

en goodies

ng, a pretty outdoor rug,
dry and a water-conserving
n editor Kathy Huber's



NESTER + HARDAWAY FOR THE CHRONICLE
Duke Freshman's home at 4901 Cedar is one
th annual Bellaire Home Tour.

our is also this weekend. The six featured
contemporary, new and remodeled
residences. Proceeds benefit the Hana and
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By **MAGGIE GALEHOUSE**
HOUSTON CHRONICLE

FILMY strands of incense smoke float through the Houston Heights home of Gilbert Perez and Nick Eronko, wafting their way to the spot where visitors tend to linger and let go of the ordinary-smelling world beyond.

The screened-in porch of the 1912 Craftsman bungalow — a breezy eating and hanging area just off the kitchen — invites meals and conversations that live long after the food and words have been consumed.

Family and friends nap here. Laugh here. Fight here. Make up here.

"This space is like a free zone for discussion and emotional conversation," says Eronko, 46, a business manager for an IT consulting firm. "I think it's the air flow. Feeling the breeze is like water washing over you. It takes things away you want to get rid of."

Perez, 44, an interior designer, nods in agreement. He and Eronko laugh as they recall a birthday party on the porch that was, perhaps, too cathartic for a few of their guests.



INSIDE OUT: Nick Eronko, left, and Gilbert Perez on the screened-in porch of their bungalow at 900 W. 14th St., one of six homes featured today and Sunday on the Houston Heights Association Home and Garden Tour.

Overlooking a brick courtyard filled with small statues and potted plants, the porch isn't fussy or overaccessorized. Mossy green cushions and whitewashed furniture — some of it old, some of it made to look old — summon Florida and the south of France. You would never know that the sofa and cushioned chairs, which Perez bought for \$100, were once dark wood with red velvet upholstery.

Perched on a long shelf above the kitchen windows is an eclectic grouping of watering cans. A side table holds a small bowl of wooden acorns. **Three old**
Please see **ROOM**, Page E6

HOUSTON HEIGHTS ASSOCIATION HOME & GARDEN TOUR

■ **When:** Noon-6 p.m. today and Sunday

■ **Where:** 900 W. 14th St., 1144 Alston St., 1303 and 1609 Cortlandt, 207 E. 24th St., 501 E. 27th St.

■ **Tickets:** \$15 at Heights Fire Station, West 12th and Yale, or at each of the

homes; \$5 for individual home tickets.

■ **Extras:** Fire Station Art Show and Sale, West 12th and Yale, noon-6 p.m. today, noon-8 p.m. Sunday

■ **Information:** 713-861-4002



PLANT STAND: A vase of Peruvian lilies looms large over an Easter-colored grouping of small ceramic planters.



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Life of the dodo

Photographs seek to capture an enchanted world doomed to end. **PAGE E3**

LAZY GARDENER

Going to the ...

No, not the dogs, but cats: Some gardens have a feline theme. **PAGE E5**

TELEVISION

West Wing

Four-time Emmy winner for best drama series ready to air its final seven episodes. **PAGE E3**



R. CLAYTON MCKEE : FOR THE CHRONICLE

Revive that bungalow

Bungalow Revival is a boutique restoration and renovation firm aimed at saving Houston's historical gems. From small bathrooms to full-sized homes, they take great pride in their projects, incorporating an acknowledgment of historical authenticity with a realistic need for modern amenities. Their goal is to preserve and create architectural spaces that honor Houston's history and welcome its future. Above, Gilbert Joseph Perez, left, Emiliano Zazueta, Nick Eronko, Jordan Fairchild and Lina Fairchild.

**ULTIMATE
BUSINESS
OF THE WEEK**

ADDRESS: 548 Granberry

PHONE NUMBER: 713-861-7494

WEB SITE: www.bungalowrevival.com

OWNERS: Gilbert Perez and Nick Eronko

WHAT THEY'RE SELLING: Restoring and renovating period homes, from early 20th century to 1950s ranch style.

WHY SHOULD YOU GO: The owners of Bungalow Revival believe every house has a soul. After restoring their own 1920s bungalow, a new hobby was born. That hobby developed into bungalow revival after saving a Victorian-style cottage from being bulldozed in 2003. Bungalow Revival began restoring and selling period homes, but the demand for their inventive take on modernizing a bungalow while honoring its original form has them busy serving individual homeowners in and around the Heights.

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