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History Restored // Springer Mansion Depicts City's Era of Opulence

By [Mona Shoup](#)
5/6/1993

This year's Tulsa Philharmonic Designer Showcase returns to an era of opulence when living was easy and early day oilmen built Tulsa's first lavish mansions.

The featured home is the W.A. Springer Family mansion, built in 1918, located at 585 Fairview Ave., near the Tulsa Country Club and just west of the entrance to the historic Brady Heights District off North Denver Avenue.

Springer was a gas and oil producer and the first to drill a gas well in Tulsa and lay a gas line to the city. His son, Dr. Murl Springer, founded Tulsa's Springer Clinic. More than 39 Tulsa interior designers volunteered their talents in the revitalization of the 12,000-square-foot, three-story red-brick home, said design coordinators Bob Cisar and Kirk Holt of Cisar-Holt Inc.

"The designers did a super job in making their designs work with the architecture of the house. It's really a visit to the past. The designers brought out its Old World feeling but with a '90s flair," said Cisar.

"Many civic leaders have commended the Philharmonic and Rhonda Donica, the showcase chairman, for taking on a home in north Tulsa and helping to revitalize this historic neighborhood,"

said Holt. The home was a challenge because it had been neglected for about 50 years and sat empty for about 20 years. "Usually the designers just come in and redecorate. This year we had to totally renovate



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and restore the home, and then decorate," said Holt. Participants working on the home finished in only four weeks - a project that normally would take a year, they said. The Arnolds, the home's new owners, were wonderful to work with and have done an unbelievable amount of work

on the home, said Cisar. Tom and Phyllis Arnold are the pastors of the Faith Christian Fellowship. The Arnolds will use the third floor retreat as their living quarters; the rest of the home will be a ministers' retreat center to help ministers who are in need, said Arnold. The home's history has as much character as its architecture. The third floor was originally a recreation area where Springer, J. Paul Getty and other Tulsa oil men used to play cards. During the renovation, the designers found poker chips stuck behind radiators, said Cisar. After the original owner left in 1947, the home had several other owners, including the Salvation Army's Evangeline Club and a male fellowship group. The Evangeline Club used the house from 1947-'55. It offered young working girls, who came to the city, a safe and inexpensive place to live. Room, board and television cost \$1 a day. The male fellowship group installed several wet bars and left behind lingerie stuck in funny places, said Cisar. Visitors will find traditional design with extra trims and tassels; eclectic with bold use of color and pattern, and back-to-nature and rustic looks. Wonderful window treatments styles and hardware range from elaborate to simple. The designers also use plants and greenery in interesting urns and cache pots. Rich architectural features are found in the seven fireplaces, crown moldings, plasters moldings and Gothic-style cherry paneling. The home's original interior design features styles that are again popular today. For instance, glazed canvas, with a handpainted border, covers the library's walls. Glazed silverleafing covers the living and dining room walls. To complement the old paintings, local artisans painted designs on the ceilings during the restoration. In some areas, the Springers commissioned artists to paint works directly onto the walls. These paintings were then framed as pictures directly on the wall area. Landscaping, by Clare Ashby, and a swimming pool, by Jeff Vivion, offer visitors ideas for the outdoor living.

[By Mona Shoup](#)

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