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They may be Realtors, but their walls aren't white

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By ANGELA BENDER For Sun-Times Media

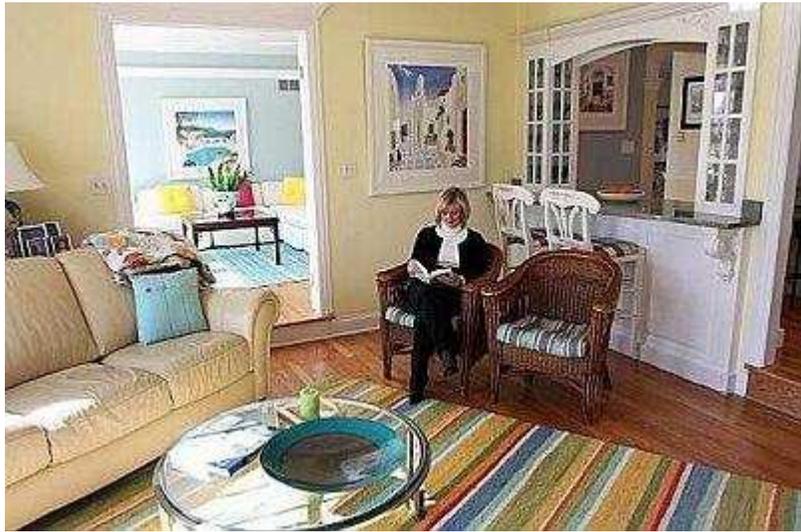
Those unable to get away this spring break can take a cue from the Reddings, who live in Naperville's Cress Creek neighborhood, but manage to feel like they are living in the tropics year round. The Reddings have created a Caribbean atmosphere in their home through the use of color and art.

"I hate winters," Peg Redding said. "Being from California, it is so hard."

Redding and her husband, Herb, who are both Realtors, bought the ranch home, which was built in the 1970s, in 1996. They liked the floor plan, but knew the home needed work.

"We tend to buy location and then rehab the property," said Redding, who has lived in four different homes in Naperville, "These Cress Creek ranches have great floor plans. We have great views (of the golf course) from the family room and master bedroom."

The 2,300-square-foot house had not been altered since it had been built, which is one of the things the Reddings liked about it. The home had linoleum in the kitchen and carpet everywhere else.



Peg Redding enjoys her Caribbean-style home in Naperville inspired by the paintings on her walls. (Robyn Sheldon/For Sun-Times Media)

Their first renovation involved raising the 8-foot ceilings in the family room and living room and then raising those in the kitchen. Because the house is a ranch with a large attic, according to Redding it is "really pretty easy to do." They then added French doors along the back of the house, including providing access off the master bedroom.

"I'm a French door addict," Redding said.

The Reddings liked all the light the house received, not just in the back, but also in the front where there are floor-to-ceiling windows.

And then came the color. By trade, Realtors tell clients to keep things neutral. So it was very out of character for the Reddings, who moved frequently including a home in Miami, to use such a bold color palette.

"I was a white wall person," Redding said, "(But) we're not moving so we'll paint it whatever color we want."

Redding chose a sea foam green granite for her kitchen counter tops, which limited the colors she could use to paint the kitchen. With the help of a decorator she decided on yellow.

And then they started attending art auctions and buying paintings with a distinct style from artists like Thomas McKnight. McKnight uses a silkscreen technique that creates paintings with brilliant colors and clean shapes. The art in the Reddings' home depicts places like Antigua and Sarasota.

"If you buy that kind of painting you have to decorate your house around it," Redding said. "It evolved into more color."

They continued to accessorize with the tropical theme. Decorative plates depicting different beaches throughout the world hang on the walls. Brightly colored bowls and a turquoise collection of glassware are on display in their white kitchen cabinets. A bold rug covers the family room floor. They even have pineapple-shaped pendant lights hanging over the kitchen island.

The Reddings enjoy their tropical oasis, but acknowledge that despite how warm it may feel inside, Naperville winters can still be long.

"We'll never move," Redding said. "But we'll probably spend a month in Florida (in the winters) when we retire."

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