

ART NEWS + PREVIEWS • MEET THE COLLECTORS • SANTA FE'S RUMORED TUNNELS

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Vigas over a century old slope downward in the kitchen, part of the original three rooms of Keith Gorges and Ricardo Sanchez's Eastside home. Gorges hand-carved the only viga that had to be replaced into the rectangular base of the island's chandelier. Flamed and polished granite countertops, new appliances, and sleek, modern fixtures by Santa Fe By Design perfectly complement the glossy, cobalt blue cabinetry.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT his company, Tierra Concepts, builds mostly new houses, co-owner Keith Gorges loves a good remodel—particularly when the property in question is a piece of Santa Fe history. The Eastside adobe that spoke to Gorges and his partner, Ricardo Sanchez, was built in the late 1880s as a small dry goods store, but over time morphed into a patched-together, multifamily residence. When its ceilings, walls, and floors were opened up, the old house revealed itself as a marvel of craftsmanship and traditional New Mexico materials. Mindful of the home's contribution to Santa Fe history, but also wanting to express their fondness for contemporary design, its new caretakers have respectfully—indeed, lovingly—balanced old and new in their home. Read all about it on page 52.

behind these walls

a renovated historic Eastside home
confidently reveals its secrets



by Amy Gross

photographs by Wendy McEahern

Above: The interiors reflect the owners' preference for modernist furnishings, meaningful art (much of it by Gorges's brother Kevin Gorges), handmade pieces such as the dining room table, and a few cherished family antiques. A huge, spherical pendant light from Moooi looms above the handmade dining table; it glows, moon-like, at night.

WHEN YOU'RE A HOMEBUILDER remodeling your own home, the years of experience you've acquired building other people's residences certainly comes in handy. You're less apt to make rash decisions, for example, and you probably have a more realistic budget in mind than many of the clients you build for. But as Keith Gorges, one of the partners at Tierra Concepts Inc., knows all too well, bringing that much knowledge and expertise to a personal project also has a downside.

"I'm my own worst client," he admits ruefully. "This was probably the hardest project I've ever

done from an intellectual standpoint. It seems really simple when you look at it, but the decision-making was very challenging!"

Gorges and his partner of 15 years, Ricardo Sanchez, have done one new build and, most recently, two remodels together—a cool renovation of a Casa Solana Stamm, and their current home, a classic, Eastside Santa Fe adobe.

The oldest three rooms of the house were built in 1889 as a dry goods store, owned and operated by the Vigil family. "My understanding from Louella Vigil is that when Palace Avenue went in, the family moved the store and created the Palace



Above, right: Like many old Santa Fe houses, this one has its little quirks and charming eccentricities. The master bedroom is “just a little crooked,” says Sanchez. “It was hard to figure out where the middle was in order to place furniture.”

Right: Nowhere in the home is the owners’ deep reverence for adobe more evident than in the powder bath, where one wall of bricks was left exposed. Modern finishes and fixtures reflect Gorges and Sanchez’s desire for a harmonious blend of old and new.



“I saw these vigas, and they were beautiful—almost perfect And they’d been hidden for, God only knows, maybe 100 years.”



Grocery,” says Gorges. The dry goods store was converted at some point into a residence, and in the style of many an Eastside Santa Fe home, was added onto over the years in a jumble of interconnected rooms that expanded the square footage for multiple families. When Sanchez saw it was for sale, he and Gorges were at once taken aback by the decrepit state of the building, and yet thrilled by its possibilities.

“Ricardo’s family goes back forever in New Mexico, and he always gravitated to these older structures—and so did I,” says Gorges. “But we also had a lot of interest in more modern architecture and design. Our dream when we were looking was to find something that had some architectural roots and some history to it, but that we could adapt in a more contemporary way, or at least parts of it.”

“Without compromising the integrity of the historic structure!” Sanchez adds. “We’ve tried to preserve as much of the building as we could, and reuse materials as much as we could as well.”

Gorges jumped at the chance to collaborate with architect A. Christopher Purvis, whose expertise as a former president of the Historic Districts Review Board was invaluable throughout the project. The south-facing walls of the original three rooms—today the kitchen, dining room, and living room—were deemed a contributing façade, the most restrictive of the tiers of historic value. Windows there were rebuilt and repaired rather than replaced.

Any remodel is guaranteed to uncover unexpected twists, but a historic property in Santa Fe—particularly one from the late 19th century—is likely to offer up more than a few well-kept secrets, such as old bottles found on the higher, desert-like part of the property



Snugged into a steep hillside by a concrete retaining wall, the house is utterly private, despite its close proximity to neighbors. More spa than bathroom, the dreamy master bath (above) is suffused in natural light through abundant glass. While the original part of the house maintains its Southwest-style feel and features, the master bath, at the farthest end, was designed to be the most contemporary area; concrete floors, a frameless shower, and an angular freestanding tub deliver that fresh aesthetic.



The master bedroom and bath—the latter part of an addition to the original house—open gracefully to an east-facing *portal*, from which Buddy, one of three family dachshunds, surveys his beautifully landscaped domain.

that suggest it might have been a Prohibition-era bottle dump. Gorges was astonished to discover, behind a panel drop ceiling (such as you might find in a commercial building), there was a *second* panel drop ceiling. And behind that, a treasure. “I saw these vigas, and they were beautiful—almost perfect,” Gorges marvels. “And they’d been hidden for, God only knows, maybe 100 years.” Even more amazing, though bowed from a century of dirt piled atop the roof, the vigas snapped back once the dirt was removed.

Only one of the vigas was damaged, so Gorges and a colleague turned it into a light fixture in the kitchen, hand-chiseling it into a rectangular shape using an adze. “We didn’t use a power tool to make it square; we did it all by hand,” he says. “It was part of honoring the wood, and the history of the wood.”

Even as they revered the house’s roots, history, and old materials, Gorges and Sanchez thoughtfully imparted their modernist sensibilities into the project by utilizing traditional materials in a more contemporary way—an aesthetic Tierra Concepts calls contextual modern. “We wanted a house that literally went through the ages, from when the original rooms were built to more contemporary architecture,” Gorges explains. To

that end, the most distant part in the house is the newest, an addition to the previous buildings that became the spectacular, contemporary master bathroom.

Warm, comfortable, and eminently livable, this tastefully remodeled home and property is a sanctuary and retreat for its two busy owners, who both work full-time and have hobbies that frequently take them away from their home (Gorges is a mountain climber and Sanchez plays competitive volleyball). It's perhaps a testament to the strength of their relationship that they have not only completed three complicated projects together and remained a couple, but that they've actually devised a strategy for working through each project's inevitable challenges and learning to love and embrace the process, come what may. Along the way, they've developed a style of architecture and design wholly their own.

Neither harbors any illusions that this home will be their last, but they're honored to be its stewards and caretakers until the next enticing design and build opportunity comes along.

"I think anybody who's close to a designer or builder sort of allows for the freedom of creativity and change, and at this point I think the process is fun, too," says Sanchez. "And I've learned that a house we've loved isn't just our space; it can be somebody else's space." **ST**

Below: The façade looks essentially the same as it did 130 years ago, with the original windows and door openings.



[on the market]



16 Sendero Del Oso

Located in Rio en Medio, this charming property features lush landscaping, orchards, an *acequia*, and organic vegetable gardens. Built by Andrew Geer in 1990, the two-story main home features adobe construction, a pitched roof, vigas, Saltillo tile and wood flooring, and a deep *portal*. It offers two bedrooms, one and a half baths, a cozy kitchen, and a combined living and dining space. Recently remodeled, the main home features an upgraded in-floor radiant heating system, new Andersen windows, a solar water heating system, stainless steel appliances, new cabinetry, and granite countertops. Visitors will feel right at home in a separate guest space/studio complete with a bedroom, one and a half baths, a library, and small kitchen equipped with all the necessary amenities. The house and guest house together measure 3,260 square feet.

List price: \$885,000

Contact: Linda Murphy, 505-982-4466, Santa Fe Properties, lindamurphy.com

VIRTUANCE



[on the market]



2 Avenida De Sevilla

Gorgeous architecture and elegant style combine in this lovely Northwest Santa Fe home. Sited on over three acres, the 3,929-square-foot Territorial-style abode features open and airy interiors including three bedrooms, two full baths, and one half bath. In the heart of the home is a spacious living room with French doors that capture stunning views of mountains and New Mexico sunsets. Home chefs will love the large kitchen, which boasts high-end appliances, plenty of counter space, and a dining area with a fireplace to keep the entire room warm and cozy. The master suite is the perfect place to retire after a long day, offering a fireplace, great views, and a bathroom complete with a jetted soaking tub. Outdoors, there's plenty of space to entertain with large, open patios that seamlessly flow from the outside in. Located near Tano Road, the home is privately tucked away yet just minutes from all the best Santa Fe has to offer.

List price: \$1.475 million

Contact: Abigail Davidson, 505-954-5520, Sotheby's International Realty, sothebyshomes.com

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