

# Tour highlights family's thoughtful renovations

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By Cheryl Allen  
STAFF WRITER

A warm, sunny afternoon provides a perfect backdrop for Cathy and Carey Phelps' well-trimmed front lawn and colorful flowerbeds.

Just beyond the white picket fence, purple and yellow pansies and pink and white columbine bloom bright in the sunlight. A neat, small row of miniature boxwoods is looking dapper in its own right.

The couple, along with their fun-loving 2-year-old son, Jacob, have a great view from their front porch.

"It's a nice, relaxing yard," says Mrs. Phelps.

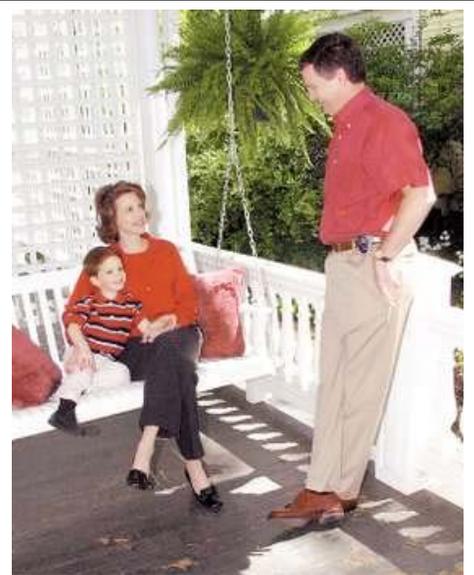
Indeed. The front yard offers just a sample of that home-sweet-home feel.

The Phelps family's 3,000-square-foot house is a two-story Dutch Colonial with four bedrooms, three baths and abundant charm.

It's also one of six homes that will be showcased during today's Tour of Historic Houses in the Hampton-Pinckney Historic District.

The event is sponsored by The Historic Greenville Foundation, and proceeds will benefit the History Museum of Upcountry South Carolina.

"We've always loved older homes," said Mrs. Phelps. And their current home, built in 1908, was a perfect fit for the couple. Its gambrel roof and spacious, wrap-around porch were enough to trigger childhood memories.



Phelps family on the front porch of their Pinckney Avenue home. Staff/Alan DeVorse

[SLIDESHOW OF MORE PHOTOS](#)

## More details

**WHAT:** Tour of Historic Houses, Hampton-Pinckney Historic District, sponsored by the Historic Greenville Foundation

**WHEN:** 2-5 p.m. today

**COST:** \$35; proceeds to benefit the History Museum of Upcountry South Carolina; \$50 tickets are also available for both tour and a patron's party immediately following the tour to be held in the garden at 308 Hampton Ave. Tour volunteers will be dressed in 19th century attire.

**TICKETS** can be purchased at the following locations:

\* Horizon Records at 2-A W. Stone Ave., 235-7922

\* The Open Book at 110 S. Pleasantburg Drive, 235-9651

"Our house that I grew up in kind of had a rounded, Dutch-Colonial look to it like this one did," says Phelps, who grew up in Camilla, Ga. (His wife grew up in South Carolina, on a family farm in Clover.)

Mrs. Phelps said they also admired the structure and layout of the house. "It had what I called, 'good bones,'" she said. "It just had a lot of the old charm of the houses we grew up in and that our grandparents had."

Plus, the location was prime.

The couple previously lived at Lake Keowee for two years, but that proved too far from the city. So, they decided to fish for a home in Greenville and came across quite a catch.

"We needed to be closer to my husband's work and activities for Jacob," Mrs. Phelps said.

Their home search wasn't difficult since they knew what they were looking for and were already familiar with the Greenville area. Hampton-Pinckney was one of the first neighborhoods they checked out.

"We both always wanted to redo an old home and we got our wish," Mrs. Phelps said. The goal was to modernize without sacrificing the historic feel of the home.

"We tried to restore as much as we could instead of just renovating, and I think we got a good mix of the old and new," said Phelps, a 47-year-old insurance broker. For instance, they refinished a claw-foot tub in a downstairs bathroom and repaired the old fireplaces throughout the home.

It took about a year to renovate the home. They updated plumbing and electrical systems, repainted all the rooms and added a screened porch and a carport.

They also gutted the kitchen and bathrooms and bought new fixtures in keeping with the house's age.

The kitchen, for instance, features beadboard cabinets with a distressed finish. The top of the cabinets are adorned with family antiques such as two porcelain-faced dolls that belonged to Mrs. Phelps' mother and an old typewriter and camera that belonged to her grandparents.

Family pieces can also be found in an upstairs guest bedroom, where a portrait of Mrs. Phelps' great-grandmother hangs over a fireplace. At the end of the bed is a cedar chest her father made in shop class as a high school student. He was talented to say the least, Mrs. Phelps said. "He built the house I grew up in so that (chest) was just the start."

More childhood memories are in the couple's parlor, which captures the essence of Victorian-style living. In the corner is a mahogany secretary that belonged to Mrs. Phelps' grandfather. "It was in my grandfather's den, and I remember there being family photos in it." Today, it showcases a collection of pink Depression glass that belonged to Mrs. Phelps' grandmother.

Nearby is a parlor grand piano that belonged to Phelps' mother and grandmother. He recalled how his mother gave him the piano on the condition he would learn to play her favorite song, "Amazing Grace," whenever she came to visit him. "That was an incentive for me to get back and learn. I don't play a lot, but I do play some."

And when he does, there's a welcoming Queen Anne sofa and chair for his guests nearby.

Just a glance away is the dining room, which was actually a den for the previous homeowners. "I liked the bay windows for a dining room," said Mrs. Phelps, who used white lace curtains because, "I didn't want to block the light. I also think it's more of a Victorian style."

The Phelpses' den offers a bit more modern look. Khaki walls complement a leather, mission-style chair, couch and end tables. The room also takes on a fishing theme, as a collection of antique fly rods decorate a corner. Then there's the array of fishing lures showcased in a pine coffee table with a glass top.

"I love to fish," Phelps said. "Those were my grandfather's ... growing up as a little boy, I fished with him a lot, and I remember those lures in his box so they just have special meaning that takes me back."