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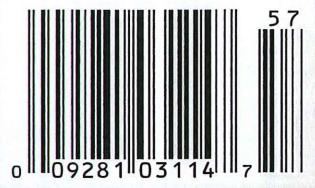
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Jewel BOX

A couple infuses their cottage kitchen with a dramatic decorating style.

BY JUSTINE LOPEZ

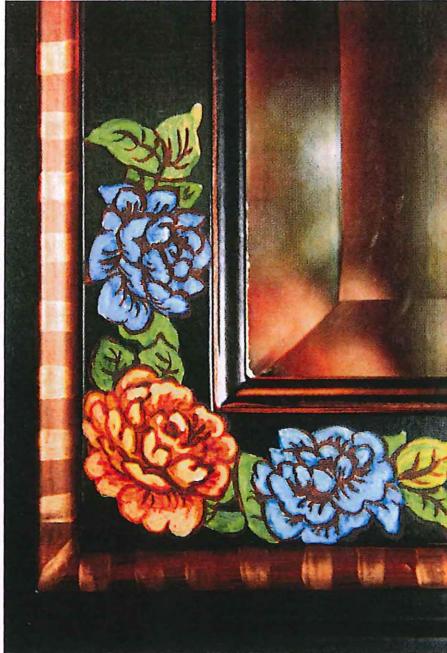
PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK MENDEZ

STYLED BY JICKIE TORRES AND HILLARY BLACK

Not a week goes by when Michelle Carder doesn't receive some sort of comment about her Victorian cottage. Drivers stop to stare, passersby pose for pictures and every so often perfect strangers approach the front door, all in an effort to sneak a peek at the colorfully painted cottage. With its bold blue exterior and teal and green trim, the 1909 hip-roofed cottage draws a significant amount of attention, but it is the home's interior that is the truly remarkable whirlwind of color.

"My style, which is always evolving, is based on whimsy, juxtaposition and not suppressing imagination in deference to traditional notions of good taste," she explains.

"Mostly, the inspiration is the art on the walls and the lighting fixtures; each room flows out of the art and lighting."



opposite

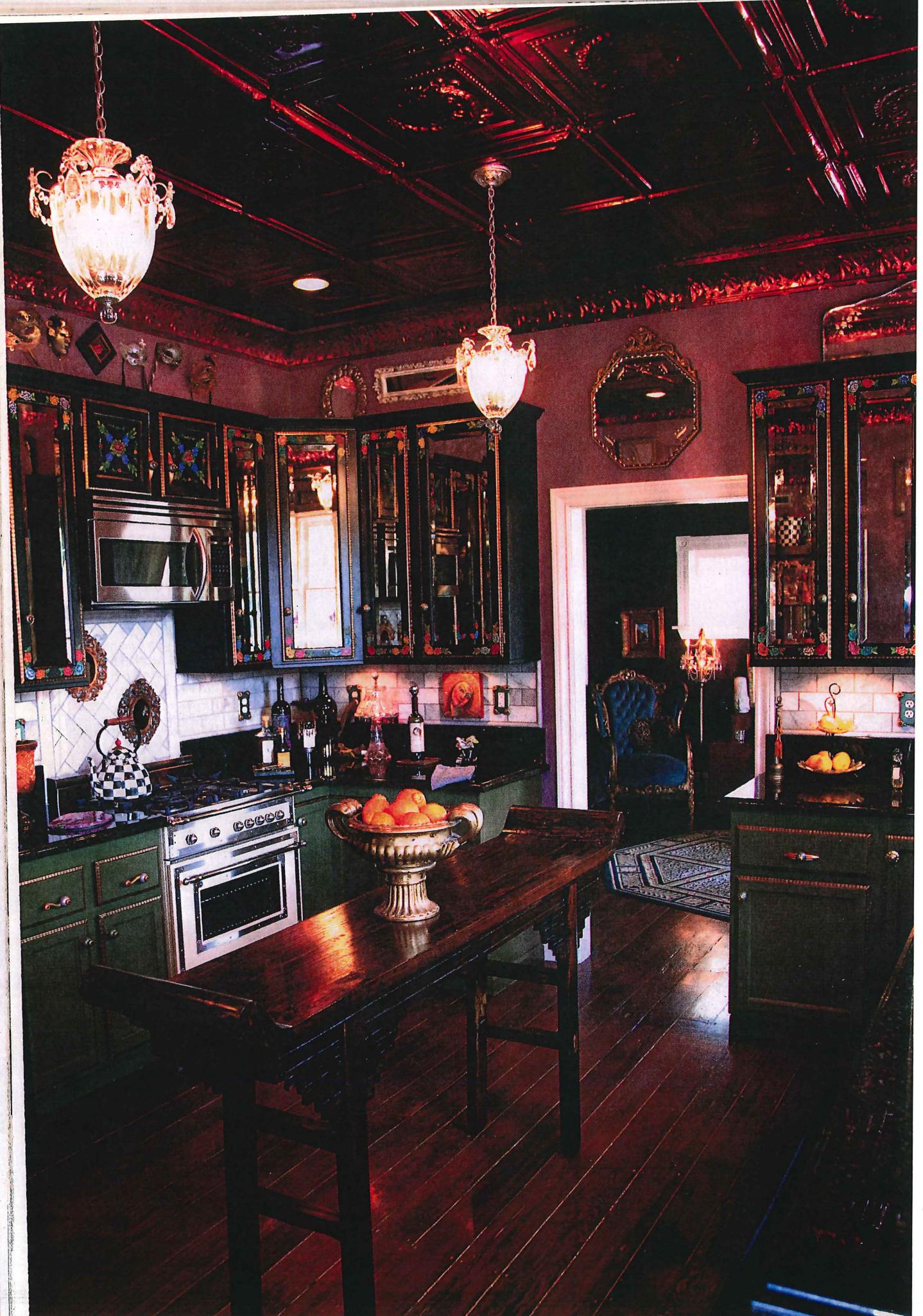
The walls were painted a purple tone to contrast with the candy apple red tin ceiling and covered with vintage mirrors and Venetian masks from Michelle's extensive collection.

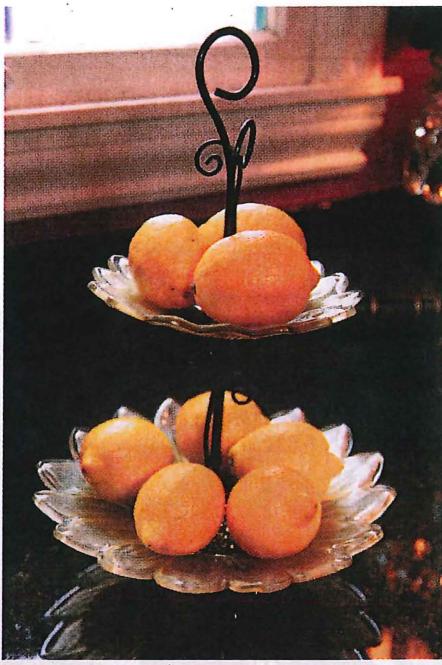
far left

Color and design consultant Kathleen Jewell hand-painted, in freestyle form, vintage floral patterns on each of the upper cupboards, choosing vibrant colors to match the cottage's bold hues.

left

Textural embellishments, like this fleur de lis, add interest.



**opposite**

The large Venetian mirror, which hangs above the sink, was the first of Michelle's collection and inspired the collage of mirrors along the walls.

left

Fresh roses add another dash of color to the 101-year-old cottage.

left below

Michelle and Mike replaced the modern stainless steel stovetop with a Bertazzoni range, which captures the vintage theme of the kitchen.



Michelle and Mike discovered and fell in love with a candy apple red tin ceiling.

Michelle moved into the turn-of-the-century cottage, which is located in a historic district, in 2006. With the help of her new husband, Mike Ochs, she has managed to redo each room of the house in her signature style, which is defined by bright colors, eclectic art and antique furniture.

Like the rest of the cottage, the kitchen had a traditional country style when Michelle first purchased the home. And the white ceiling, pale yellow walls and cabinets, and bronze fixtures didn't fit with her colorful and whimsical style. She began redecorating the room by including a few surface decorations: using a 100-year-old Chinese altar table in place of an island, hanging antique mirrors and Venetian masks on the walls and adding sparkling doorknobs to the cabinets and drawers. But Michelle wanted to transform her kitchen in a manner that matched the colorful whimsy of the rest of her home.

"The inspiration behind the kitchen was the dramatic feel of the other rooms in the cottage," she explains. "We wanted something over the top in terms of color, reflection and juxtaposition of materials and design concepts."

The initial design was inspired by a small black side table, which is decorated with a vintage floral pattern and metallic



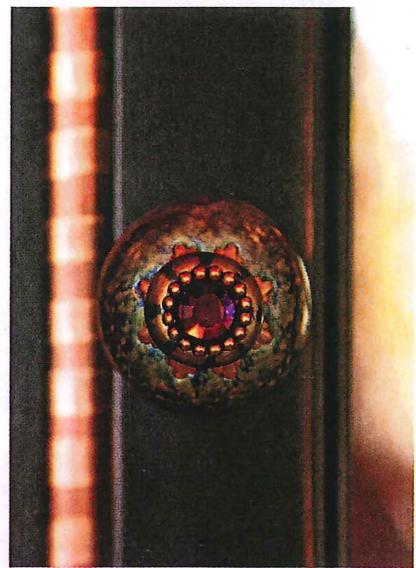


left

Spice tins add to the vintage feel of the kitchen. Jeweled ornaments are evidence of Michelle's whimsical style.

below

Goldstick's bejeweled knobs were placed on the cabinets to add to the jewel-box look of the kitchen.

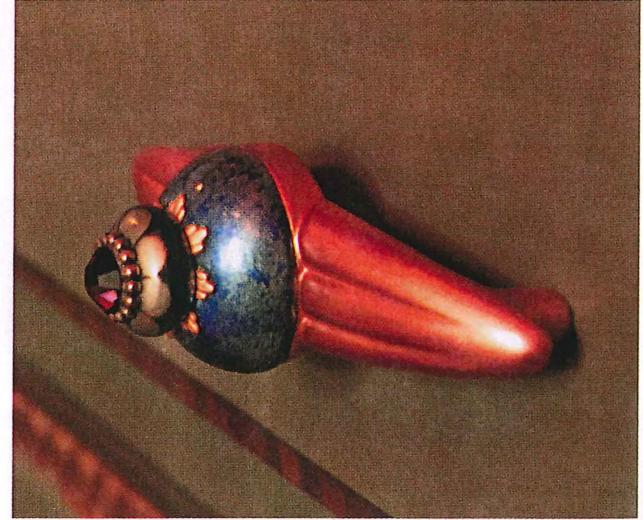


striped edges. Interior designer Catherine Monaghan came up with the idea to adopt the same floral design on the cabinets, which Michelle and Mike were quick to agree with. However, the concept deviated from the original design when Michelle and Mike discovered and fell in love with a candy apple red tin ceiling, which they promptly ordered and installed.

"We came up with a way to blend the diverse style of the ceiling with the upper cabinets," she says. "We knew we wanted to repeat the mirrors hanging everywhere, so in keeping with this motif Mike and his brother routed out the center wood panels of the existing cabinets and replaced them with antiqued mirrors."

The upper cabinets were then lacquered in a satin black finish, while the lower cabinets were striated with hues of artichoke and olive green. In order to achieve the same look as the side table, color and design consultant Kathleen Jewell hand-painted floral patterns on the black upper cabinets while the edges of the lower cabinets and drawers were accented with gold and bronze stripes.

"From that point, Kathleen and I chose Benjamin Moore's Aplomb for the walls, and we added in Susan Goldstick's bejeweled switch plates and knobs, hung mirrors and Venetian masks on all available wall space, and voilà, the kitchen is a kaleidoscope of infinitely reflecting color and sparkle," Michelle says.



To complete the vintage theme, Michelle and Mike replaced the stainless steel stove with a cream-colored Bertazzoni range, chosen for its contemporary, yet classic, aesthetic.

"The kitchen emphasizes the whimsical and dramatic personality of a 101-year-old cottage with an eternally humble soul," Michelle says. "We feel blessed to live in a house so full of life and history and we view ourselves as temporary caretakers of a monument of history. One day, the walls will be repainted, the furniture and art gone, and new owners will bring their own style and personality to the house."

SEE SHOPPING GUIDE, PAGE 94.