

Castillo Isabella: The Benedict Castle

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Riversides Historic Castle gets exclusive airtime on “Uncovered in the Archives”. Many Riverside residents are still unaware of the exotic 20,000 square foot Spanish castle that sits right in the middle of town on Chicago Ave., now known as Teen Challenge. The Benedict Castle, constructed in 1921, took 10 years to complete and sits on 15 acres. The castle was commissioned by wealthy New York financier Charles Benedict and was inspired by the Alhambra in Granada Spain. Benedict commissioned prolific local architect Henry L.A. Jekel to design the massive project that was completed at a cost of \$300,000 dollars which today equals \$4.68 million. The history of the Benedict Castle was recently featured on the TV show, “Uncovered in the Archives,” and stars Brad Pomerance and local historian Vince Moses. I was invited to be interviewed for the show and watch behind the scenes as I have my own personal connection to the castle. I grew up and lived there for almost 20 years. To my knowledge, I may be the longest resident and only person to grow up there. My parents moved into the Castle in 1984 to run the Teen Challenge program. When we first moved in, we moved into the tower, later the dungeon, then eventually the courtyard apartments, years later. I would sometimes tell my friends at school that I lived in a castle, but most wouldn’t believe me until my 3rd grade class went on a field trip there! I loved to run around and explore all the secret passageways but my favorite thing to do was to get dressed up on the weekends and crash the weddings that people would have there. I was the original wedding crasher. But, what exactly happened to Charles-



Photo Credit to Marian Semic

Located at: 5445 Chicago ave Riverside CA 92506

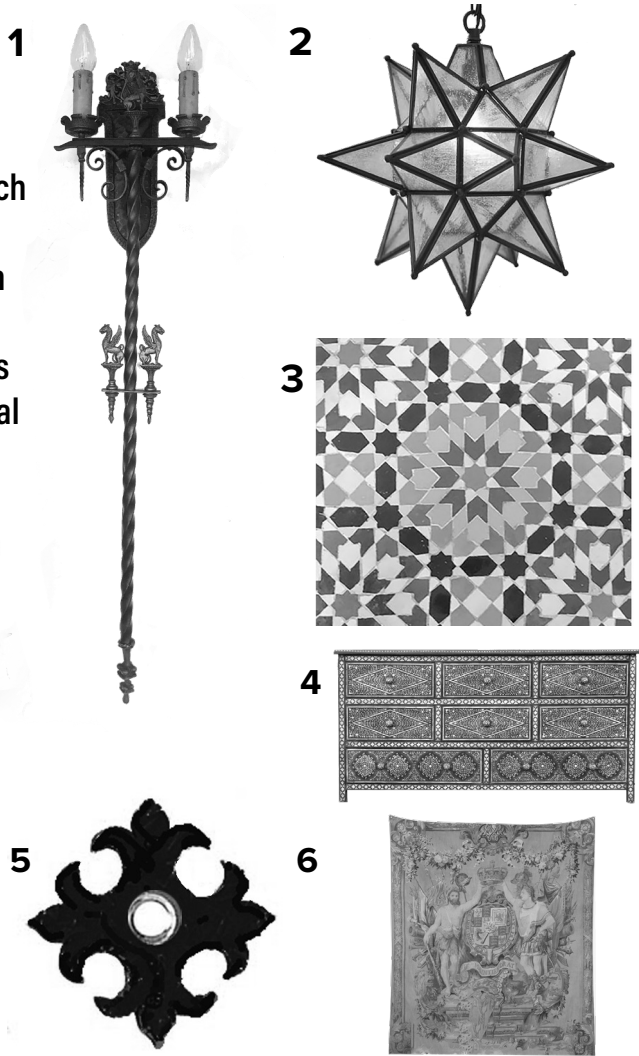
Benedict? And how the heck did Teen Challenge, a Christian based substance abuse recovery-program, become the conservators of a multi million-dollar historic Castle? Charles Benedict did not have the chance to spend many years enjoying the Castle. He had a heart attack, on the grounds of the castle, and died in 1938. (I am pretty sure I saw his ghost there once.) Louise, Charles wife, kept the Castle until 1949, when she put it on the market. Louise sold Castillo Isabella at auction, including furnishings, for just \$52,000, purchased by local investors Tom Perrin and Francis McDowell. They resold the Castle in 1953 to The Servite Order of the Roman Catholic Church. The seminary closed in 1970. In 1971 Teen Challenge purchased the property for \$350,000 and for almost 40 years they have maintained and beautified the property as the #13 city Landmark. Castillo Isabella (named after Benedict’s mother) was inspired by the Alhambra, an ancient Moorish citadel in southern Spain. The Riverside Castle is a blend of Moorish inspired architecture (keyhole arches, marble columns and Moorish star stenciling) with a Spanish medieval flare. Everything about the Castle was custom designed to Mr. Benedict’s liking, Including the massive hand-crafted medieval style door imported from Europe. He acquired stained glass windows and tile from an ancient church outside Mexico City. Benedict bought medieval-era chairs, tables and chests from Europe. The walls were adorned with seventeenth century Flemish tapestries and the floors with antique oriental rugs. Benedict traveled as far as India in search of artifacts to adorn his palace. A few pieces of original furniture and Flemish tapestries were still there when I was growing up. I could only imagine what the estate sale would have been like! Check out my decorating tips below to “get the castle look” Crystal Coleman

To learn more about the history of the Benedict Castle, and architect Henry Jekel, pick up Dr. Vince Mosses’ book, currently being sold by the Made store on 6520 Magnolia ave., or check out the exhibit at the Riverside Art Museum that features pictures and historical artifacts about Jekel and his influence on the California style. (Exhibit runs from January 18th-March 29th) If you have never been to the Benedict Castle, be sure to check out some of their annual events: April 26th 2020 Concours Car Show 9am-5pm. To find out more about Teen Challenge or to donate to the program, visit www.TeenChallenge.org | www.henryjekel.com | www.famousfred.com

GET THE CASTLE LOOK

The castle is a unique blend of Moorish, Spanish Revival and Medieval influences. Jekel personally designed each light feature throughout the Castle. My personal favorite, and the central repetitive pattern throughout is the Moorish star. It shows up as light fixtures, wall stencils, rod iron design and on the custom furniture. It has been historically used in religious and cultural contexts and as decorative motifs; for example by medieval Muslims, and in Judaism . The symbol was also used as a decorative motif in medieval Christian churches many centuries before its first known use in a Jewish synagogue. It was first used as a religious symbol by Arabs in the medieval period, known as the Seal of Solomon. Did this mystical religious symbol have an underlining meaning to Mr. Benedict? No one knows, but it makes me think of shopping in an ancient Moroccan bazar, wearing a silk tunic and smoking a hookah. Right up my alley! These vendors can help you create the far away Antonio Banderas meets Aladdin look.

1. Medieval Antique sconces. Courtesy of Riverside Historic homeowners George & Patty Thomsen, find similar styles at Revival Antiques, 542 S Fair Oaks Ave, Pasadena, CA
2. Moorish “Olivia” Star Hanging Pendant Light. Pottery Barn. \$159
3. Moroccan Mosaic Pattern Multi Colors. \$67.00 sqft www.moroccantilefactory.com
4. Enchanting Large Colonial Bone Inlay Dresser. www.de-cor.com 30 South San Gabriel Blvd, Pasadena, CA
5. Moorish Star Doorbell. \$48.00 www.stevenhandelmanstudios.com Showroom at: 716N. Milpas st Santa Barbara, CA
6. Flemish Family Arms Wall Tapestry. Starting at \$40.43 www.etsy.com



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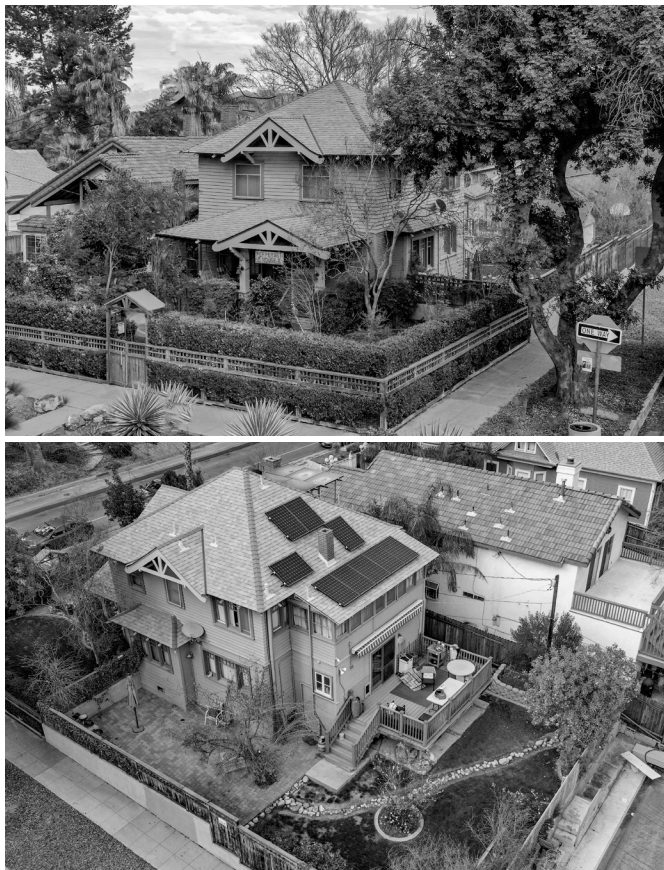
4668 Beacon Way

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“After living in our home for 43 years in the Mount Rubidoux Historic District, my husband and I decided to sell our home. We wanted to find a realtor who knew the market and appreciated the homes in the downtown area of Riverside. Over the years we had noticed the real estate signs in our neighborhood, many of which belonged to “Famous Fred and Crystal,” so we arranged a meeting at our home. We immediately connected with Fred Gordon and Crystal Coleman and decided to sell our home. We wanted to find a realtor who knew the market and appreciated the homes in the downtown area of Riverside. Over the years we had noticed the real estate signs in our neighborhood, many of which belonged to “Famous Fred and Crystal,” so we arranged a meeting at our home. We decided to look no further. We were impressed with their professional presentation and Crystal’s explanation of how they arrived at the suggested sales price, taking into account a good price for us, but one that would achieve a quick sale. They both had great suggestions and names of people who could help us get ready for the open house. Three days later, after the open house, we had full price offers. “Team Famous” led us through the inspections and the escrow process with ease. I can’t say enough about how we felt we were in good hands and appreciated their accessibility to answer all of our questions and concerns. We are happy and confident to highly recommend Crystal Coleman and Fred Gordon for all your real estate needs. They are professional, knowledgeable and best of all, truly great people.” Cathy and Bruce

FEATURED LISTINGS

3892 Redwood Dr.



THE PEPPER STREET HOUSE

Just a block from the Mt. Rubidoux entrance, in the “Evergreen Quarter” Historic District sits this beautifully restored 1907 Craftsman pool home, known as the “Pepper Street House” with a Guest House! Recently renovated, it is a showcase for the artistry and skill of many craftspeople from both the past and the present. Filled with wonderful Arts and Crafts details throughout. The home features all the original un-painted woodwork, Brazilian cherry wood floors throughout and box beam ceilings. The living room has a wood burning fireplace, a gorgeous wood staircase and a sitting room with original floor to ceiling built-in bookshelves. Upstairs are 3 nicely sized bedrooms, remodeled bathroom and a large sunporch, the perfect additional guest room or office. The dining room is well lit with plenty of windows overlooking the patio and a handsome original buffet sideboard. The kitchen was tastefully remodeled with tons of storage, butcher block counters and a large walk-in pantry. Off the kitchen is the laundry room and guest bath. The back of the house features a large deck just off the kitchen for perfect summer BBQs. The property consists of a large double lot, plenty of yard space, fruit trees and a large pool with electric pool cover for safety. 2 car garage, guest house, and RV parking. The guest house is currently an Airbnb at \$2000 a month in extra income! The current owners went all out on this restoration that included rebuilding and earthquake retrofitting the foundation, adding solar panels, building the fully permitted guest house, and new garage with EV charging station, new roof, new dual zone A/C, paint inside and out and more. Walking distance to Fairmount Park, Downtown, and Mt Rubidoux!

JUST LISTED
PRICED AT \$650,000

4465 5th Street



DESIGNED BY G. STANLEY WILSON

Situated in the heart of the “Colony Heights Historic District” and a stone’s throw from the prestigious “Bankers Row” sits the Carleton Derby House, a historic two-story 1910 craftsman with all the original Arts and Crafts details, designed by G. Stanley Wilson. Sit back and enjoy the tree lined street and the beauty of this neighborhood on the huge front porch with an exposed wood bead-board ceiling. The extra wide oak front door greets you with original hardware. The family room features box beamed ceilings, quarter-sawn oak floors, original book-case built-ins, functional wood burning fireplace and the most exquisite original light fixtures. Large pocket doors open to the formal dining room surrounded in rich wood wainscoting and plate rail. The original built-in sideboard creates a lovely focal point and the perfect spot for dinner party gatherings. The kitchen was recently remodeled with white shaker cabinets, quartz counters, and high-end appliances. Remodeled powder room on the main floor for added convenience. The second floor offers three spacious bedrooms, full bathroom, laundry room, and large bonus room wrapped in original case-ment windows. Out back enjoy the cozy deck just off the kitchen for some al fresco living. The backyard is peaceful and secluded. the property has alley access with a two car garage and RV parking. Approximately 2800 Sq. Ft. 3 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms. Walking distance to Fairmount Park, Lake Evens, Mt. Rubidoux, and Downtown.

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PRICED AT \$689,500

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SOLD \$585,000



2617 Carlton Pl., Victoria Woods

SOLD \$550,000



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SOLD \$470,000

2020 WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS

Despite the uncertainty in the market, buyers are still buying and sellers are still selling. We are adapting to new marketing techniques with virtual tours and on-line meetings. Interest rates are historically low and people are pushing forward with their plans. We have resources for you.

IF YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT BUYING or SELLING, GIVE US A CALL!

ABOUT FRED & CRYSTAL

We are Fred and Crystal, an award winning, husband and wife Real Estate team that specialize in vintage/historic properties in Downtown Riverside. Crystal has lived in Riverside since the age of three. At that time her parents moved into our City landmark, The Benedict Castle; to run the Teen Challenge program. She grew up in the Castle, moving from the tower, to the dungeon, to the courtyard apartment, which gave her a deep appreciation and keen insight into our local history and architecture. She has attended RCC and UCR studying Art History and Interior Design, now specializing in historic homes and Real Estate for the past 10 years. Crystal is an animal lover, art collector, loves antique stores, and selling historic properties.

Fred was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan. He was born into the auto business, his Dad was a car dealer and moved the family to LA to open his first car lot in California. With 35 years in sales, marketing and contracts Fred was practically born into sales and became the Sales Manager and top producer for the family business. Fred discovered Riverside 20 years ago and fell in love with downtown and the historic charm. Fred has been specializing in historic Homes and Real Estate for the past 15 years. Fred is a Car Guy and loves to cruise his 1964 Ford Galaxy wagon to the local car shows and Downtown.

Fred and Crystal are a powerful team combining their unique talents and skills to provide exemplary service to their clients. Together they have sold 100's of homes including some of the City's most iconic properties. We love to help people achieve their Real Estate Goals. Call us for a free market analysis to find out your home's value. No one knows your home better than the local experts! CALL 951-545-8846 or go to FamousFred.com



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