

personal space

Havens at home

THE HOUSE: *An Uptown shotgun built in the late 1800s, near the Thoth parade route*

THE OWNER: *Jacqueline 'Quack' Avegno*

THE SPACE: *A glass-enclosed room that formerly was a back porch*

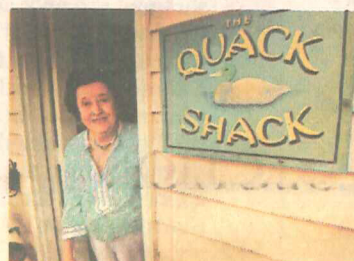
WHY SHE LOVES IT: *The light-filled room is a comfortable spot from which she can see her grandsons play nearby*

The window-lined room is filled with light and comfortable white wicker furniture. Carnival decorations, comfy cushions, pillows and Legos add spots of color.

PHOTOS BY JOHN MCCUSKER / THE TIMES-PICAYUNE



'The Quack Shack' used to be a back porch on the Uptown home where Jacqueline Avegno has lived since 1955; she converted it into a room a few years ago. 'We don't use the living room anymore,' she says.



A PICTURE-PERFECT PORCH

SOMETHING TO QUACK ABOUT: A sign that says "Quack's Shack" welcomes visitors to the favorite personal space of Jacqueline "Quack" Avegno.

It was Monday, and the smell of red beans wafted from the kitchen through the French doors that open onto the glass-enclosed room, full of light, comfortable white wicker furniture and, often, her grandsons Beauregard, 11, and Archer III, 6. Carnival decorations, comfy cushions, pillows and Legos add spots of bright color.

"We always sit out here," Avegno said. "We don't use the living room anymore; haven't used it in I don't know how long."

The living room is at the other end of the 2,447-square-foot Uptown home. From this room, she and her daughter, Micheline Van Denburgh, can wave to each other.

This used to be a back porch on the Uptown home where Avegno has lived since 1955, until architect Daniel D. Taylor of Koch & Wilson helped Avegno convert it into a room a few years ago. Van Denburgh and her family lost their home in Lakewood South near the 17th Street Canal; their youngest son, now 6, was born five days before Hurricane Katrina and spent one night in the house. The family lived with Avegno for some time afterward.

"We were trying to figure out what to do, rent or buy," Van Denburgh said. Then the house behind her mother's went on the market, and they bought it. "My husband parked his car in front of the (for sale) sign every day so nobody would see the sign," she said.

PLAY TIME: A gate was cut in the back fence for easy access, and Avegno remodeled the back porch so she could enjoy watching her grandsons play in the backyard, and they could play inside on rainy



Enclosing the porch also enabled Avegno to create an indoor play space when her grandsons visit on rainy days.



The glassed-in porch allows Jacqueline 'Quack' Avegno to watch her grandsons play in her yard.

days. At one point she had a trampoline for them; now, a concrete pad where a workshop used to be is convenient for a basketball court.

This time of year, around 100 people attend the Thoth parade party that Avegno and Van Denburgh host for friends, schoolmates and out-of-town cousins. A food table, with red beans and rice, will be outside Avegno's back room.

A couple of items in the glassed-in room, including the "Quack's Shack" sign just outside the door and a large Walter Anderson print, were recovered by her son-in-law from Avegno's house in Pass Christian, Miss., that succumbed to Katrina. A full-length white wicker sofa is an antique, and the white wicker chairs and tables came from Pier 1. Avegno added a couple of sturdy bergere chairs that used to be in a hotel, stripped and whitewashed to fit in

with the pale color scheme.

Special accents include an old tool chest painted white ("one of the Avengos was a master carpenter") that holds the TV, and the charming wicker high chair that was Avegno's when she was a baby. A painted wood carving by an area artist depicts the family Labatut plantation in New Roads. ("My grandmother was a Labatut," Avegno said.)

A large pale dhurrie rug ties everything together under the vaulted beamed ceiling, which is punctuated with a skylight between the rafters and a triangular window at the top of the vault. The original back wall of the house, painted cypress boards, is the wall next to the kitchen.

TALES OF TRANSITION: Avegno said she's not sure how old her house is, but like all old houses, it has many tales of transition to tell. At one time it was a doctor's office,

and it was moved from the middle of the block to the corner key lot. The doctor had many children and wanted to build a bigger house, she added; a very large Victorian is next door.

"This never was a double," Avegno said. "I think it was a stable at one time."

Before she and her husband moved into the house, another architect helped Avegno with it: Her mother, who had built her

own house on Jefferson Avenue.

The house has the original wooden mantels and bathrooms. At one point, the kitchen was so narrow that it had fold-down boat stoves that opened like suitcases out from the wall.

"Everybody used to want to come see them," Van Denburgh said. "I think one out of four burners worked." In an earlier remodel, the kitchen was extended 3 feet toward the street.

One of the handiest things about the newest addition to the house is the custom railing the architect put on the side steps, leading up to the side door. The side rails are angled so that grocery bags can be passed through it, up onto the porch floor.

"And it works for suitcases, too," Avegno added. "I use it all the time."

— JUDY WALKER

Prestigious Living AFFORDABLY PRICED

◆ ENTRANCE FOUNTAINS ◆ COMMUNITY GAZEBO ◆ MANDEVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT ◆

Autumn Haven

Homes from the \$150's to the \$230's
(1,303 A/L/A - 3,130 A/L/A)

Sales Center & Design Gallery open daily until 5pm.

985-882-4830 ◆ Big Branch, LA

Driving Directions to Autumn Haven in Big Branch: From New Orleans take the Causeway north to Mandeville. Veer right on to the East Causeway Approach and proceed to Highway 190. Continue east on Highway 190 for approximately 6 miles to Pugh Road. Turn left on to Pugh Road and go north 1/2 mile, look for Autumn Haven on the right.



Like Us On
facebook 

www.SunriseHomes.com

**OPEN
HOUSE**
EVERY SATURDAY
IN INSIDE/OUT CLASSIFIEDS
& EVERY SUNDAY
ON THE BACK PAGE OF THE
REAL ESTATE SECTION