

Getting to Know Your Neighbors...

Kristal Kirksey and Kevin Tate @ 1133 Arlington



hard to place them into loving homes. Currently up for adoption at the store is a beautiful cat named Toby, who is sweet and shy and just looking for the right human to take him home.

Kristal's funky and eclectic home décor, clothing and accessories boutique on W. 19th Street in the Heights is a favorite stop for locals and non-locals alike. Wandering through the store is an unforgettable visual experience and she and her staff make you feel like welcomed and cherished guests. Kristal's eye for antiques—which she refurbishes in brightly-colored shabby chic finishes—as well as indoor and outdoor décor, clothing, shoes, jewelry, and accessories, is unique and gifted. Don't get in her way during the bi-annual Round Top Antiques Fair events—she doesn't miss one—but her very

Kristal and Kevin met at a Fitzgerald's concert in the Heights many years ago, but it was some time after that at an Elvis Costello concert when they reconnected and soon began dating—now having been married for four happy years. As you can discern from these details, they both love music and attend a lot of music events, including their favorite musical venue, Jazz Fest in New Orleans.

Kevin has been in the Houston music scene for 25 years and plays the drums in a band, called *Dune, TX*. He collects and restores vintage

drum sets which are displayed in his music studio—a small building separate from the main house—along with vintage music posters and classic mid-century furnishings. Kevin is also an avid runner and has finished several Houston marathons, and his day job is consulting for a large firm that provides fire and safety services to worldwide industrial clients. Kristal and Kevin's other passion is for animals. They love to spend time with their three dogs, Bella, Happy and Petie, and cat, \$3K (which they say is actually now around \$10K)—all rescues. They dream of someday starting an animal rescue operation designed to give homeless animals plenty of room and lots of love and care while they wait for their forever homes. Her store, Jubilee, has become an unofficial homeless cat shelter of sorts. Her customers and friends occasionally bring in stray kittens and cats and Kristal and her staff work



favorite place to shop for vintage furnishings and collectibles is right here in the 'hood at August Antiques and Ben's Garden Shop on Heights Boulevard. They give her a ring when something fabulous and outrageous comes in, such as a recently-purchased mid-century black panther coffee table.





Kristal and Kevin give back to the Heights community and many nonprofit organizations every year—providing gifts for every guest to enhance fundraising events such as the Houston Heights Association’s volunteer appreciation dinner and, for the third year in a row, this year’s HHA Holiday Home Tour Patron Party to be held on Thursday, December 1. Kristal and her good friend, Ellen Newcaster, also designed the venue for the HHA’s 2011 Candlelight Dinner and Auction, which netted over \$100,000 for that organization this year.

Kristal purchased the home they share (built in 1920) in 1997. It is a wonderful two-bedroom cottage that retains its original floor plan, and the interior and exterior design reflects a free-spirited artistry common to this diverse neighborhood. The recent removal of newer, shingle-type siding that was added post-World War II revealed pristine wood siding original to its 1920 construction. Kristal and Kevin

subsequently painted the exterior in fun, vibrant colors which reflect their personalities. Kristal and her good friend and Heights landscaper, Justin Hegan of Red Oak Landscaping, have collaborated for years to create a lush, tropical paradise which features a beach-entry pool, a pond, fun collectibles, and out-of-the-ordinary plantings. Kristal and Kevin love hanging out in their sunny backyard pool sipping margaritas with the speakers wailing bluesy rock tunes.

Kristal has a Master’s degree in Art History and American Decorative Arts from Rice University. Collecting since college, their home is filled with vintage Americana and antiques, including coin-operated vending machines, Coca-Cola signs, mid-century furnishings, Depression-era Fiesta dinnerware, and wild 50s kitsch. One of their favorite artists is Keith Crane, a Heights artist who creates sculpture from found metal scrap and vintage collectibles—three of which amazing pieces are found in their home. Go by and visit this Heights gem on December 2 and 3 when it will be featured on the Houston Heights Associa-

tion’s Holiday Home Tour (visit www.houstonheights.org for more information). You will witness a large collection of vintage Christmas Americana, including a lighted angel choir, a plastic Santa collection, a rooftop Santa and his reindeer, and assorted trees throughout the home—one adorned exclusively in pink ornaments.

We love the Heights and are grateful to live in the greatest neighborhood in Houston, say Kristal and Kevin. Our friends and neighbors have been extremely supportive of us and our business, and lasting friendships have been made through volunteering for Heights functions, particularly the HHA home tours. We wouldn’t live anywhere else.

