



Two CPAs + One Castle = A Historic Renovation

BY NATALIE ROONEY

Steve and April Carver are a rare find – for multiple reasons. First, they’re both CPAs. Second, they own a castle. Now, thanks to their restoration efforts, they have earned a place in history alongside some of the early 20th century’s most famous names.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

government to protect the property. The result was a conservation easement on both exterior and interior portions of the castle and grounds. "It's unique to have a conservation easement on the inside of a property," Steve explains.

In June 2016, Steve told the firm he planned to retire in 2018. The timing was fortuitous, because not too many months later, the Carvers received a postcard announcing that Redstone Castle was to be sold at auction for a minimum bid of \$2 million.

Suddenly, the castle wasn't so far out of reach. They researched, discussed, and finally decided on a number. If they could get to that number, they would go for it.

On Oct. 7, 2016, Redstone Castle was auctioned. The Carvers beat out two other bidders, purchasing the property for \$2.2 million and becoming the 11th owners in Redstone Castle's 114-year history.

Now the work really began.

FROM VISION TO REALITY

The Carvers called their architect, Nan Anderson. "We told her what we'd done," Steve laughs. Over dinner, they discussed concepts, drawing their ideas out on a napkin. "We ended up doing ninety-five percent of that," he says.

April had a vision: a boutique hotel offering an elegant experience, without losing the authenticity of the structure. Because of the interior conservation easement, they couldn't change any of the architectural features. "But why would we want to?" April points out. "The architecture and the structure are unique."

Steve says that structurally, the castle was in phenomenal shape. It had been built by the best craftsmen of the time. To make sure the original features were restored to their former glory, the Carvers brought in restoration experts who discovered, among other things, that what was thought to be a gold leaf ceiling in the library was actually aluminum leaf – more valuable than gold in Osgood's time.

When the renovation began, the castle had three working bathrooms. Seventeen were created by tucking them into repurposed spaces or by renovating existing bathrooms.

The intricate frescoes, the glazed ceiling in the library, the velvet walls in the dining

room, the leather walls in the library, and the hand-rubbed Honduran wood – the Carvers were committed to giving all of it new life. This was no small feat as some rooms had suffered water damage over the decades.

They re-established the original main receiving area. They found an original door in the barn, and local craftsmen worked to match the original trim. The restoration experts recast and reglazed the ceilings. Leather was restretched. Wallpaper was cleaned,

"It took all of our years of experience to get this done."

repaired, and re-stenciled to match the original.

Ultimately, they touched every wall, ceiling, and floor in the interior. No walls were moved, successfully preserving the same unique arches and structures Osgood enjoyed.

The Carvers used cameras to examine the castle's plumbing and found it in nearly perfect shape. Clay pipes 10 feet underground were accessible by brick-lined manholes. "It was exceptionally well done," Steve says.

The sanitary sewer system, which had been the undoing of previous owners, was a challenge that spanned two years (and 20 meetings with various officials) from permits to completion. The solution was to run sewer pipe three-quarters of a mile from Redstone, uphill to the castle.

This, Steve says, is where being CPAs was invaluable. "We were able to work through all of the issues and to understand things like the conservation easement, what land use codes meant, and dealing with officials. I've

said it took all of our years of experience to get this done. Thank God we didn't do this at age 35!"

Steve credits the success of the renovation to April's knack for details and decorating. "She always pays attention to the way things are, talking to the architects. You see it in everything at the Hotel Denver and the brew pub." He also admits things go better "when I stay out of decorating decisions."

THE BIG REVEAL

In November 2018, Redstone Castle opened for business with 11 luxury suites. Each has a separate bedroom, bathroom, and sitting room and is approximately 500 square feet. As of March, 2019, 120 paying guests have spent the night at the castle. Many more nights are already on the books. The Carvers gave more than 1,000 tours in the first two and a half months.

This summer, the castle will host picnics, historical society fundraisers, and musical revues. Wedding inquiries are rolling in, as well. "We're in the process of raising awareness," Steve says.

The Carvers' niece and nephew, Jennifer and Pete, live on site, manage the day-to-day operations, and take care of guests. They're clearly doing something right because they have a perfect 5 out of 5 rating on TripAdvisor. April and Steve still live in No Name, where they have had a home for the past 17 years.

"From wildlife biologists to noise studies, from historic restoration to structural engineers, from water guys to sewer construction, we've met a ton of different people and learned a lot of different ways of doing things," Steve reflects. "It's a complicated business, and we're fortunate to have our training and experience as CPAs." He talks about the Colorado and federal historic tax credit issues which he hadn't dealt with much during his career. "I met with experts to help me understand, and I learned about it all. It was a process."

The wisdom which came from the experience, according to Steve: "You don't grow old if you're continuing to learn." ▲

If you'd like to learn more about the history of Redstone Castle, visit theredstonecastle.com.