



STRENGTHEN

Why some people are passionate

By Sarah J. Dills

On any given day, as long as the skies are semi-clear and the temperature is above freezing, the streets of Over-the-Rhine are bustling with lawyers, P&G executives, architects and entrepreneurs—the emerging faces of the neighborhood. ● Marc Cop might be spotted taking his Belgian parents to Taste of Belgium for some authentic cuisine, Chris Heckman and Kristen Myers could be found pushing their son's stroller



Jackson Street



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The Lackman on Vine Street

ING THE COORIE

about living in Over-the-Rhine

Photos by Chris Bucher

into Park + Vine, and Barbara Hauser may be seen grabbing a latte at Coffee Emporium on her way to work. ● These are just a few of the residents who now call Over-the-Rhine home, and they are aware that their presence in the neighborhood is a small part of a big movement to revitalize the once damaged area on the edge of downtown.

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A deep history

Over 150 years ago, German immigrants heavily populated the area located just north of downtown—separated from the city by the Erie Canal (where Central Parkway is located today.) The Germans began referring to the trip across the Erie Canal as going “Over the Rhine”—referencing the Rhine River in Germany.

Over the years the demographics of the area fluctuated and the population drastically declined. Once home to almost 50,000 people, by the mid-nineties less than 10,000 residents lived in Over-the-Rhine.

It's no secret that the area has been plagued with turmoil in recent history. Drugs, poverty and crime escalated with riots bringing issues of race and equality to the front pages of newspapers across the country in 2001. Despite the controversy, Over-the-Rhine remained an oxymoron of such. Street after street of historic, untouched Italianate, Federal, Greek Revival, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Renaissance Revival architecture kept a glimmer of hope and curiosity alive in this area of despair.

Several concerned city officials and members of the corporate community gathered in 2003 to brainstorm ways

L The buildings are no longer vacant,” Mileham says. “People are looking out the windows, people are on the streets. They are shopping and eating and enjoying themselves. It changes a place.”

Reasons to hang around OTR

“Not only do we have all these great new residences in the neighborhood, but down below are wonderful commercial spaces that have become the new scene,” says Gunther. “It makes me want to jump out of bed and get to work every morning, because I feel like I’m a part of something big.” According to Anastasia Mileham, the vice president of communications for 3CDC, the real estate development company has renovated 91,000 square feet of commercial space in Over-the-Rhine. Both Gunther and Mileham agree that trying to define their favorite restaurant is like trying to pick a favorite child—but they are so happy to have that problem in the once vacant area of town.

BARS & RESTAURANTS

A Tavola

Neapolitan pizza and Italian cuisine made from scratch daily using fresh, seasonal ingredients.

1220 Vine Street
atavolapizza.com

Abigail Street

Stop in for a glass of wine... or the whole bottle

1214 Vine Street
Facebook: [Abigail Street](#)

Bakersfield

Just opened in early February. Tacos, burritos and other Mexican-inspired street food.

1213 Vine Street
Facebook: [Bakersfield OTR](#)

Lackman

1237 Vine Street
lackmanbar.com

Lavomatic

Elegant food in a casual atmosphere. Stop in between 11-3 on Saturday or Sunday for brunch.

1211 Vine Street
lavomatr.com

Senate

Where else can you have fresh market oysters and a hot dog named the Trailer Park?

1212 Vine Street
senatepub.com

Taste of Belgium

Home of the Liège waffle
1135 Vine Street
authenticiwaffle.com

SHOPPING

Atomic Number 10

1306 Main Street
atomic10.com

Cooknee

1150 Vine Street #11
cooknee.com

Couture Couture

1315 Main Street
couturecoutureboutique.blogspot.com/

Joseph Williams Home

1232 Vine Street
josephwilliamshome.com

Little Mahatma

1205 Vine Street
littlemahatma.com

Mannequin Boutique

1405 Vine Street
mannequinboutique.org

Mica 12/v

1201 Vine Street
shopmica.com

Original Thought Required

1307 Main Street
otrrefresh.com

Park + Vine

1202 Main Street
parkandvine.com

Sloane Boutique

1216 Vine Street
sloaneboutique.com

SmartFish Studio

1301 Main Street
smarterthanagoldfish.com

Suders Art Store

1309 Vine Street
sudersartstore.com

Switch Lighting

1207 Vine Street
switchcollection.com

Urban Eden

1313 Main Street
mainstreetotr.com

ENTERTAINMENT

Ensemble Theatre

1127 Vine Street
cinycetc.com

Know Theatre

1120 Jackson Street
knowtheatre.com

Music Hall

1241 Elm Street
cincinnatiarts.org/music/hall

TOURS

Queen City Underground

1218 Vine Street
www.americanlegacytours.com

Segway of Cincinnati

1150 Vine Street #17
www.segwayofcincinnati.com

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A Tavola

Photo by JCDC



12th and Vine



Main Street

Photo by JCDC



Vine Street

Photo by JCDC

to revitalize Over-the-Rhine, and 3CDC was born. The Cincinnati Center City Development Corporation is a private, non-profit real estate development company with a mission to strengthen the core assets of downtown Cincinnati by connecting the Fountain Square district, the central business district and Over-the-Rhine. Since 2004, more than \$324 million has been invested in these three focus areas.

According to Anastasia Mileham, vice president of communications for 3CDC, some of the heavy-hitting corporate alliances represented on the board of directors include Procter & Gamble, Kroger and Western & Southern.

"Nobody wants to live in a crime-ridden area except the criminals," Mileham explains of the group's strategy to get people to move back to the neighborhood. "By purchasing vacant, vandalized buildings, cleaning them out and securing them, we've been able to get rid of the criminal element in our focus area."

The focus area of 3CDC's work is from Central Parkway to Liberty heading north and from Elm Street to Main Street traveling east.

While some people may still feel a safety concern when considering moving to Over-the-Rhine, all of the current residents agree that safety's never been an issue.

"I've always felt safe," Cop explains. "I wouldn't let my Belgian parents walk around alone on the streets if I didn't think it was safe. They speak English, but they still aren't from here. I can say the same for my children. They are adults, but they will always be my children."

Cop isn't the only person raving about the close-knit community emerging in Over-the-Rhine. Old and young, singles and families—the demographic is as diverse as the architecture, the dining and the history of Over-the-Rhine.

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INTERNATIONAL TRANSPLANTS

The international transplants

Cop and wife Cristina Chuecos have called Duncanson Lofts home since they moved from Blue Ash in January of 2009.

"We were fed up with the gardening, the snow and the leaves," Cop explains of one of their many reasons for leaving the suburbs. "We were drawn to Blue Ash for the wonderful school districts, but after the children were out of school we started to consider a more urban lifestyle.

"We both worked for Procter and Gamble, so we were downtown a lot. But our social life, dining, everything else happened in the suburbs. For a while, we had the impression that the city was rolling up the sidewalks at six o'clock in the evening, but when the revitalization started we were drawn downtown."

Cop, from Belgium, and Chuecos, from Venezuela, both had interests in old buildings and architecture. "I was a bit disappointed when we toured the lofts around Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Streets because



TOP: Cristina with Coby, Marc with Milou (after recent surgery) OPPOSITE TOP: Steps to rooftop deck

they had covered the brick walls with drywall. All of the historical elements that I liked—the exposed brick, the original wood floors—had been covered.”

Duncanson Lofts was a perfect marriage of historic charm and modern amenities. “This space gave us additional room, which can sometimes be difficult to find downtown,” Cop says. “We had to have a second bedroom for houseguests who can sometimes stay for long periods at a time.”

The four-floor unit has an interesting floor plan that maximizes space in an unconventional way. The main entrance to the condo is actually on the third floor where the kitchen and living room are located. The fourth floor is home to the office and guest suite and has access to the rooftop deck. The master suite is on the second floor. Cop says after he got used to his bedroom being below the kitchen and living room, he really began to enjoy the privacy. “It is really our space. Nobody else is on that level of the house,” he explains. The first floor of the building has commercial space in the front and a storage/catchall space in the back where Cop has his wine rack and home gym.

“We have an elevator, so the stairs were never much of a concern,” Cop explains of the multi-level unit. “We have a parking lot behind our building, and I just pull up with my car to the main entrance and into the elevator. I come right into my kitchen, so I really have no problem getting things in and out of the house.”

Mark Gunther, of Wichman Gunther Architects, was creative when designing the floor plan for Cop and Chuecos’ four-floor condo. “We did an inverted design with an eye toward the sky—the rooftop deck and the city view,” Gunther explains. “The more appreciated space to live in was where the view was best and where there was access to the rooftop.”

Cop says the views from his rooftop deck are one of his favorite aspects of his urban dwelling. “When it’s nice, we’ll sit outside and watch the lights,” he adds.

While finishing the rooftop deck, Cop found 130-year-old newspapers stuffed in huge holes in the wall. “Of course they deteriorated as soon as I pulled them out because they’d been in there so long, but it was a neat sign of the age of my home.”

Cop and Chuecos also became intrigued by an architectural detail of their building—a C on top of the fourth floor of the building. After speaking to people in the neighborhood and doing some research, they learned that the C stood for Elizabeth and Charles Chambers, the family who built the house in 1880.

According to Cop, the downtown lifestyle is much more familiar to his life in Belgium than the suburbs ever were. “We love the fact that we are amongst people. Just during the time we were refinishing the floors in our condo, before we even moved in, I already knew more people here by name than I did after living in Blue Ash for nine years.”

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Photo by Marc Cop

RESOURCES

Architect

Mark Gunther, Wichman Gunther Architects

Developer

NorthPointe Group

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THE

NEW PARENTS



50 housetrends.com



TOP: Chris, Otto and Kristen LEFT: Sitting room ABOVE: Teddy the cat near master bedroom FAR RIGHT: The view from the roof deck.



To say Chris Heckman and Kristen Myers are passionate about the rebirth of Over-the-Rhine is an understatement. The couple's relationship reads like a roadmap of downtown Cincinnati. They met and got engaged at Park + Vine. During their wedding at the Contemporary Arts Center they asked guests to make donations to the Cincinnati Streetcar Fund where they raised nearly \$7,000. They settled into their condo on Sixth Street and began their life together.

"Both of us grew up in the suburbs, but we really enjoy urban living," Heckman explains. "We enjoyed living right downtown, but knew we would need more space if we started a family, so we decided to start looking around."

When the couple first saw their unit at Good Fellows Hall, they immediately saw potential in the volume of the space. "It is essentially one open room of living space. All of the windows along the south wall give a ton of light. There is nothing to block out the sun or the views," Heckman adds.

The only problem with the unit was the lack of a second bedroom, but Gunther was able to accommodate the growing family's need thanks to one of the most unique features of the home.

"The big wooden truss in Chris and Kristen's condo is a very unique feature of that building because it's not typical for that kind of construction," Gunther explains. "It allowed us to have a lower level below without any support. We wanted to keep the truss because it led to a big volume space.

"When Chris and Kristen purchased the condo, they said one thing they were really missing was another bedroom. They loved the architectural drama of the space, but needed to resolve this issue. We were able to build the floor area from the truss to the wall and leave the main level open. It created the cool little space that is now Otto's bedroom."

Otto, the couple's ten-month-old, is just beginning to get his sea legs, but Heckman says he's not too worried about all of the stairs in their home. "What's that expression—necessity is the mother of invention?" Heckman jokes. "I guess we'll get baby gates, but right now I just follow him around all day."

An elevator makes lugging all the baby gear around a breeze. "Unlike other babies we've heard about, Otto doesn't really like being in the car," Heckman adds. "Which is good, because we don't get in the car much. When the weather's nice we walk to Fountain Square or the library."

And while Otto's still a little young to go with dad to work at Losantville on Main Street where Heckman's an industrial designer, it's definitely something they're looking forward to in the future.

For now, Heckman is enjoying spending time with his son at home. "I really think standing in the extreme southwest corner of the living room and looking up at Otto's room with the three windows and the huge beams is my favorite part of the space. There's so much going on with the architecture and lines, I think it's visually stunning."

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RESOURCES

Developer/contractor

Bill Otto and Bernie Baum,
Urban Sites Property
Management

Architect

Mark Gunther, Wichman
Gunther Architects

Living room rug

Angela Adams from MICA 12/v

Lighting

Switch Lighting and Design

LED light support in kitchen

Deluco Architectural Metals

Clock over fireplace, Mid-century hutch and modern bath cabinet

MICA 12/v

Nomad cardboard wall system

Park + Vine

Mid-century chairs

Modern Relics

Mid-century desk and file cabinet

Algin Office Equipment -

Coffee table (Sitting room)

Designed by Chris Heckman,
Losantville Ltd.; built by
Deluco Architectural Metals

Barstools and recliner

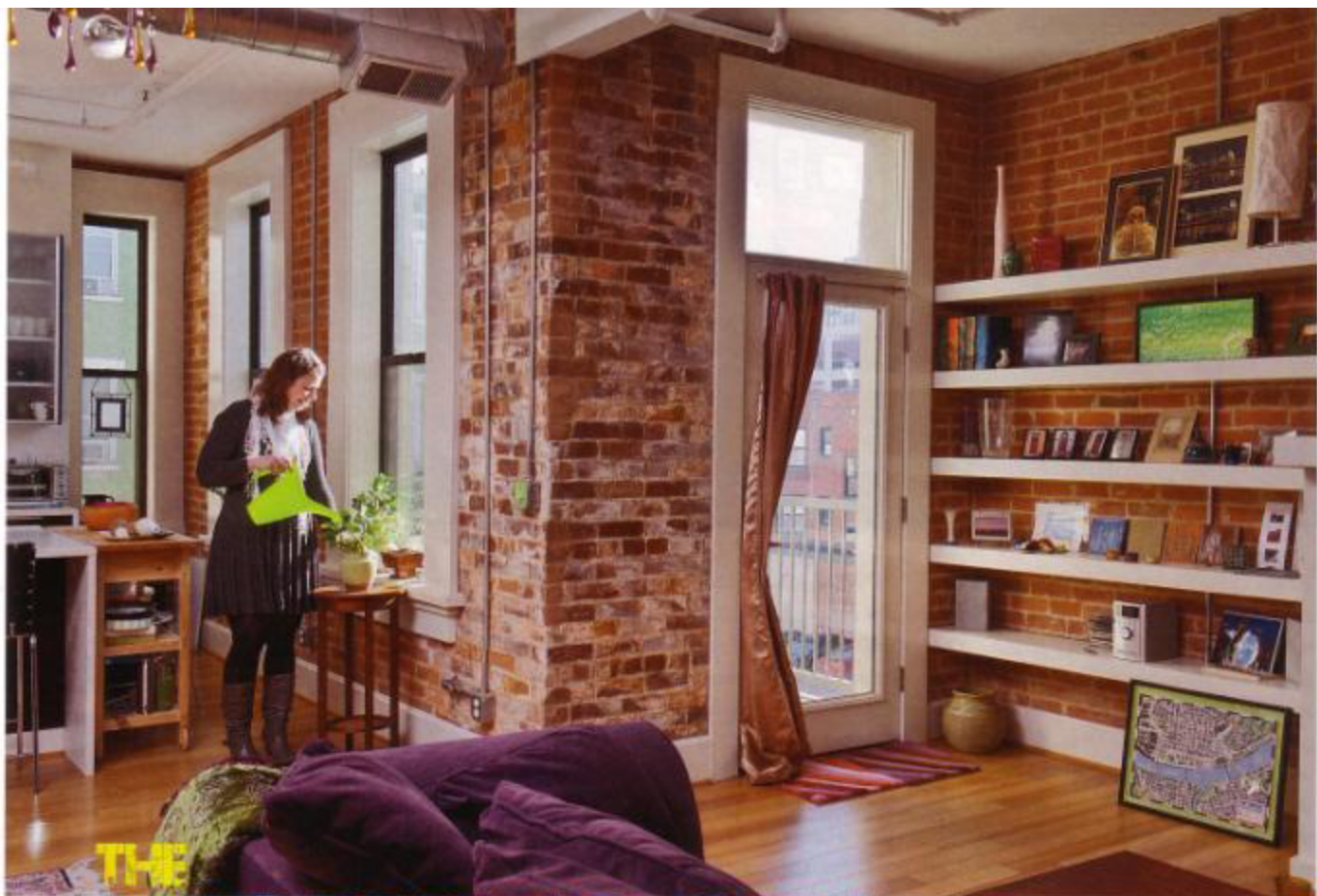
Joseph Williams Home

Fireplace screen

Bramwell's

Living room mirror

John Dixon



THE WORKING GIRL

Barbara takes advantage of southern exposure.

The working girl

Barbara Hauser was born and raised in the suburbs of Cincinnati, but her parents' Brooklyn, NY roots meant she spent a lot of time in the city. "New York was kind of a second home," Hauser explains. "I've always enjoyed being in the city."

Hauser's first apartment was on Fourth Street. She then moved to Prospect Hill. While looking for a home with more space, Hauser was introduced to the Lofts of Mottainai. "I love the location. I feel like I'm in the heart of everything," she says.

Mottainai is a Japanese term that expresses regret when something is wasted. The building was named for its LEED Green Certification. Hauser says finding a LEED certified home was very important to her.

Gunther says he noticed developers looking to build green homes as the demand increased. "The marketplace was becoming more and more aware, so buy-





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RESOURCES

Architect

Mark Gunther
Wichman Gunther Architects

Interior planning

Jodi Bruemmet Studio Twelve12

LEED Certification planning

Barb Yankle, Green
Building Consulting

Developer

NorthPointe Group

Rugs

Angela Adams from MICA 12/v

Cabinetry

Cooknee Euro Style Cabinets

Flooring

Bamboo in main rooms,
Cork in bedrooms

Lighting

Switch Lighting and Design

Barstools

HighStreet Cincinnati

Chandelier in dining room

Athaus Furniture

Candles

Joseph Williams Home

ers wanted LEED homes," he says. "It's based on a point system, and a big part of the score is reuse of the existing building. They also look at external factors like where the building is located, is it in walking distance of shopping and dining, is there public transportation, is there a park nearby? All of those things add up to a greener solution."

Some of the interior elements that add to the home's LEED certification are the bamboo and cork flooring, the screen panels made of recycled two liter bottles that separate the rooms, the quartz countertops, Energy Star appliances and low-flow toilets. "You don't have to give up style to be green," Gunther adds.

Hauser loves the exposed brick, shelving units and sliding doors that give her home character. "I try to buy as many of my small décor items from local shops," she adds. "And there are so many great shops to choose from. It's so nice to have so many options within walking distance." 🐾