



**THE LIVING ROOM** works as both intimate conversation space and entertaining center with the folding doors enclosing or exposing the television.

## Like a child's hidden treasure

in the gap of a brick wall, something special has been saved behind a wrought iron gate in Houston's Museum District. The neighborhood's quaint charm remains in its smaller homes, but new, larger homes have begun to dwarf the original bungalows. Luckily, local shop owner Cynthia Davis and her architect/designer husband, Issac Preminger, weren't looking for a teardown when they discovered a coveted piece of real estate: the little white cottage behind a simple adobe wall that's been converted comfortably into a Tuscan-like courtyard since 1927.

Issac knew the original owner, a well-respected doctor who had emigrated from Argentina decades before. Although the doctor had been out of the house for years, he maintained ownership for his life and adamantly opposed selling for fear of what might become of it. So Issac, who'd lived in the neighborhood and had always admired the 1,270-square-foot house with striped awnings, rented it from Cynthia for a while.

"A good house in Houston? You stalk that for years," says Cynthia.

Every now and then the doctor would visit Cynthia and Issac, toting the house's original drawings. Issac remembers: "He'd say, 'Now tell me what you're going to do to the house.' He'd see our plans and show us what he would do if he were to move back in."

Confident in the couple's modest and tasteful makeover intentions and feeling a connection to the recently married couple looking for their first house (much as he and his wife had done a half century before the doctor sold, and the uncovering began. >