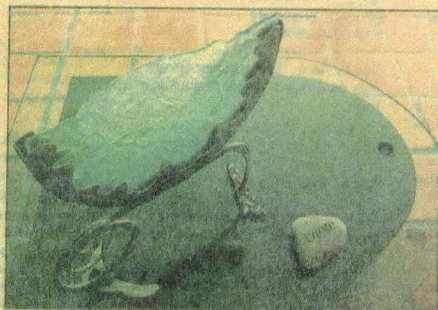


Accent

Section E



controlled clutter

Straus' art house is a work in progress

By Merilyn Potters

LAS VEGAS SUN

Like its owner, the Straus house is capricious, eclectic, sparking with energy.

It began as one of Las Vegas' desirable addresses, in Rancho Nevada Estates near the chichi Rancho Circle neighborhood.

Joyce Straus and her husband, a doctor, moved into the almost-new home 30 years ago for \$40,000. It has since evolved into a much larger, rambling set of large rooms, studios, nooks and cubbyholes.

"It was just a regular large house," says Nevada Supreme Court Justice Miriam Shearing, Straus' longtime friend.

"The entire family room wasn't there. The inside is more spacious. The gallery is new. The entire front is new. The look from the outside is new."

Yes, there's been gradual renovation. But there's also been the bit-by-bit adding of artistry. The house has become a display center for Straus' many explorations in art.

In fact, the house has paralleled her artistic development.

A former dance teacher, Straus began dabbling in different media more than 25 years ago, when, through weaving, she discovered the hues, softness and versatility of yarn.

Hooked on texture, she picked up knitting and crochet needles. In her spacious master bath hangs a huge patchwork of knitted and crocheted remnants, on which a giant starfish clings.

She took drawing lessons, picking up a sketch pad for the first time since her childhood.

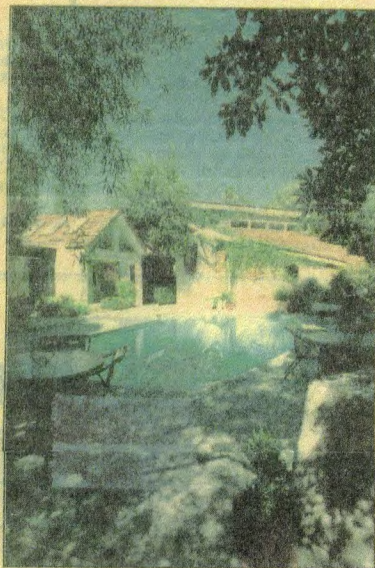
"I discovered that, even though my style was not realistic, I had a style uniquely my own, as we truly all do."

That style had been squashed long ago.

"When I was 7 years old and in an art class, I was asked to draw a cow. The teacher put a cow on the board and we were told to copy it. I lived near a butcher shop in a big city, and my only observation of a cow, one I was familiar with, was one divided into several sections."

So she drew her butcher-shop cow. But rather than labeling various beef cuts, she colored the sections with stars and stripes and flowers.

"Well, the teacher told my parents that I should get dancing lessons because I had no talent in art at all.



photos by brad talbutt/staff

ART IS EVERYWHERE in Joyce Straus' house, especially in the gallery, top, which sits behind the main house by the pool, right center. A glass-and-iron original in the living room, top right, features her credo ("create") on a stone. The bathrooms feature some of Straus' more daring experiments, including hand-painted walls with neon, right. Just about everything is fair game for her creative energy, including her doggy door and the purple winding staircase, above, and the sun-streaked, rounded kitchen, above center.