

HOW BOB BRECK'S GARDEN GROWS

Longtime weatherman and his wife, Brenda, talk about their outdoor sanctuary



Brenda and Bob Breck sit on a garden bench amid Cassandra plants in containers at their Metairie home.
Jeff Strout

Times Picayune Sep 27, 2024

INSIDEOUT

HOME DESIGN GARDEN REAL ESTATE

BY JYL BENSON | Contributing writer

Bob Breck, longtime TV weatherman, turns his passion and eye for detail to his New Orleans garden

A passionate, skilled gardener, he. A fine artist, she. And a beautiful home they have wrought.

Bob Breck, a native of Hammond, Indiana, is best known for his 30-year career as the meteorologist and hurricane guru for WVUE-8 TV. Over thousands of hours of invoking both calm and fear, he's earned a place in our collective psyches shared only by the late Nash Roberts and his ever-present Sharpie.

"During hurricane season, Bob is still under contract to write his blog for the television station," the weatherman's elegant spouse, Brenda Breck, said. "So, he's still accessible. He's still around."

"People assume that because I am his wife, I always know what's happening with the weather. I have no clue," the Monroe native said.



Bob and Brenda's garden offers several cozy seating areas.
Jeff Strout



One of the many seating areas in the Brecks' garden getaway includes yellow Allamanda (foreground), pink bougainvillea and yellow mums, with lemonade and homemade cookies on the table to welcome guests.

Jeff Stroud

The newly installed pergola includes comfy outdoor furniture from Livio in Lacombe. But that isn't a rug: Brenda Breck painted the concrete to look like a modern outdoor one.

Jeff Stroud



The back garden includes statuary surrounded by lush plantings of bougainvillea, vinca and Allamanda.

Jeff Stroud

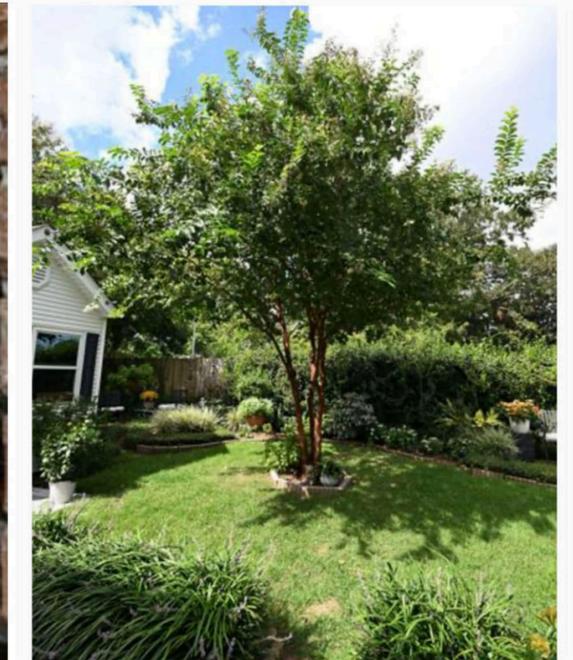
Married 21 years, the couple has shared the same soothing 3,000-square-foot home on a quiet Metairie street for "I don't know, 16, 18 years?" said Brenda Breck. "It suits us."

Planting the Garden

Central to Bob Breck's garden is a finely developed crape myrtle with a perfectly planed canopy that forms a skirted corona over the garden below. It replaced a water oak that Hurricane Ida took out, necessitating an overhaul of the garden.

The space is divided into different "rooms," including a 300-square-foot pergola the couple recently finished and then furnished with deep, comfortable furniture from Livio in Lacombe.

Brenda Breck painted the likeness of a geometric rug on the concrete floor, eliminating the necessity for the upkeep of textiles.



Bob Breck's landscape, redesigned after Hurricane Ida, includes this sculpted crape myrtle and, foreground, a particularly lush planting of liriope. The combination shows his skilled hand in the garden.

Jeff Stroud

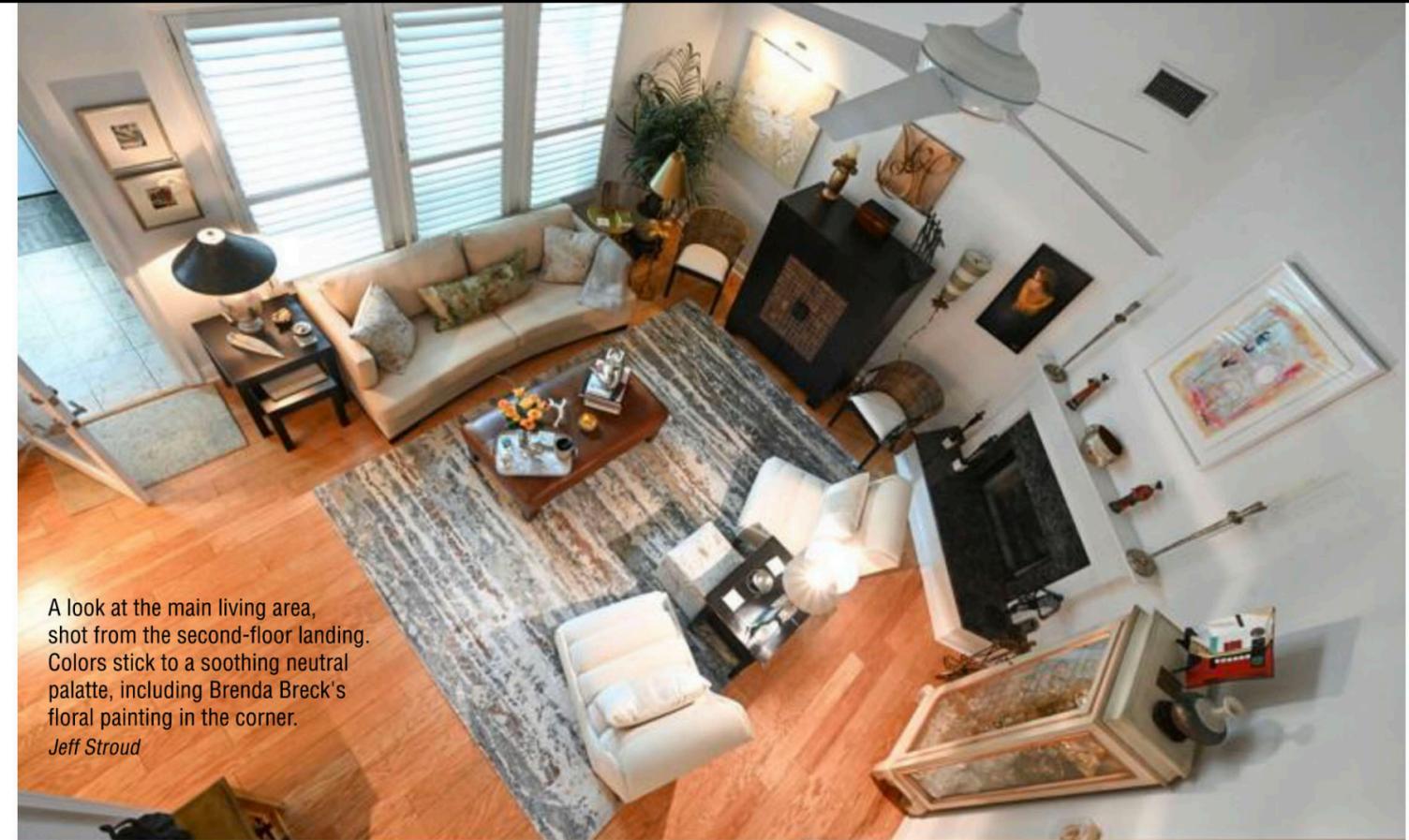


A bar in the living room keeps the Brecks' lovely collection of glassware in easy reach for entertaining. It's illuminated by a back mirror, which catches the plentiful sunlight.

Jeff Stroud

This hallway vignette carries out the Asian theme from the dining room. It also includes Bailey the dog.

Jeff Stroud



A look at the main living area, shot from the second-floor landing. Colors stick to a soothing neutral palette, including Brenda Breck's floral painting in the corner.

Jeff Stroud



The dining room, with its Asian theme, makes interesting use of space by orienting furniture on a diagonal.

Jeff Stroud

The garden is resplendent with a large silver-backed begonia, complemented with lush plantings of star jasmine, a hedge of yew, a pair of Crossandras the color of a Creamsicle framing a garden bench, training bougainvillea, hedges of liriopoe of uncommon lushness and density, roses, camellia, variegated American holly, and Allamanda the color of buttercups.

A ruby red grapefruit tree is a prolific producer of fine specimens.

Bob Breck favors Perino's garden center for his plant materials. "I'm no expert but rather a tinkerer," he said. "I do whatever Peter and Buddy Perino advise me to do."

An abundance of feeders creates a wildlife habitat that attracts families of bluejays, chickadees, thrashers, sparrows, cardinals, golden finches and the occasional hawk.

The Art

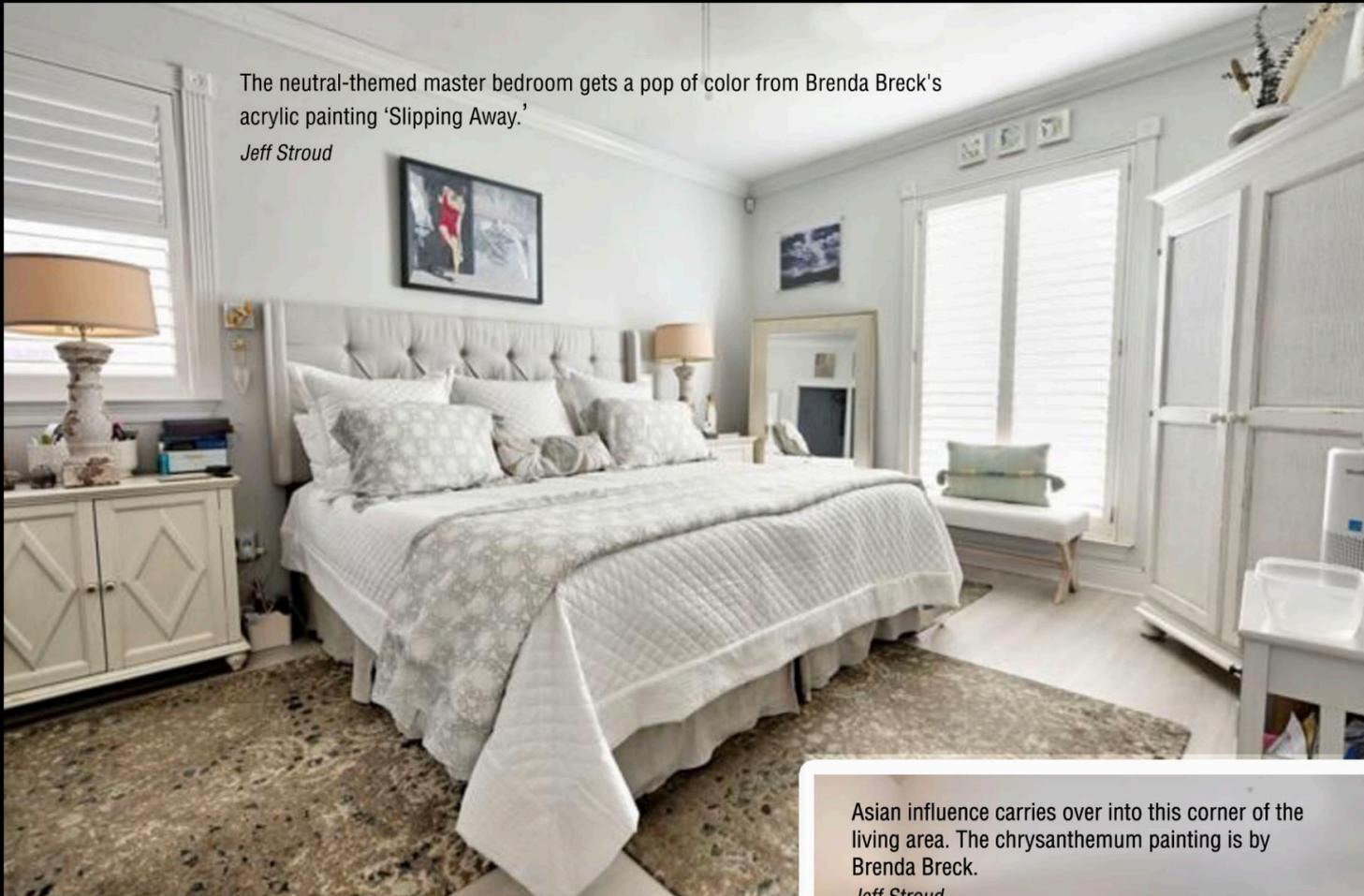
A self-taught artist, Brenda Breck's fine paintings and mixed media works, many featuring the likenesses of women, are found throughout the home. Through her art, she has raised money for children battling cancer, people with Down syndrome and autism, the New Orleans Museum of Art and other nonprofits.

Her style encompasses all forms of Representational Art: realism, impressionism, idealism and stylization. Her work is vibrant, elegant and emotional. Her figurative works range from very realistic to semi-abstract.

She quotes Georgia O'Keeffe in summarizing her relationship to her craft: "I found I could say things with color and shapes that I couldn't say any other way — things I had no words for."

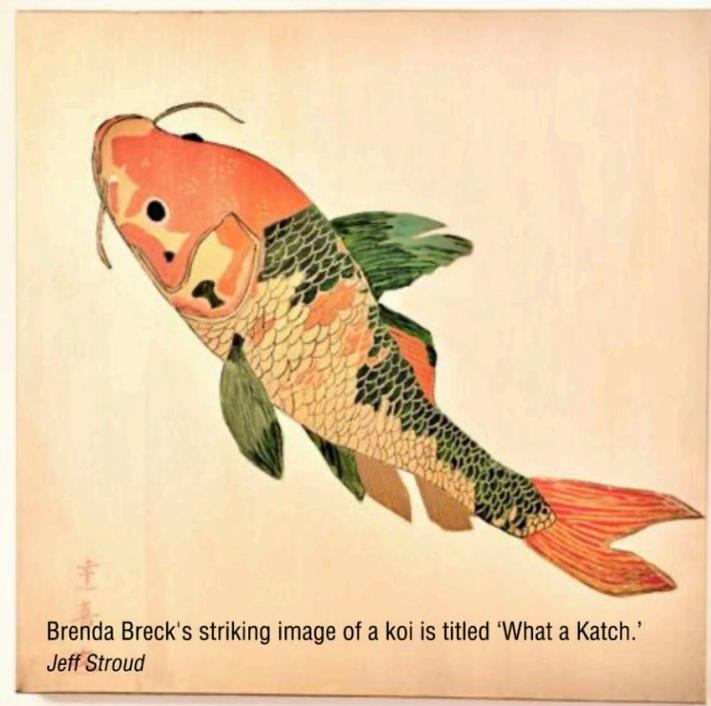
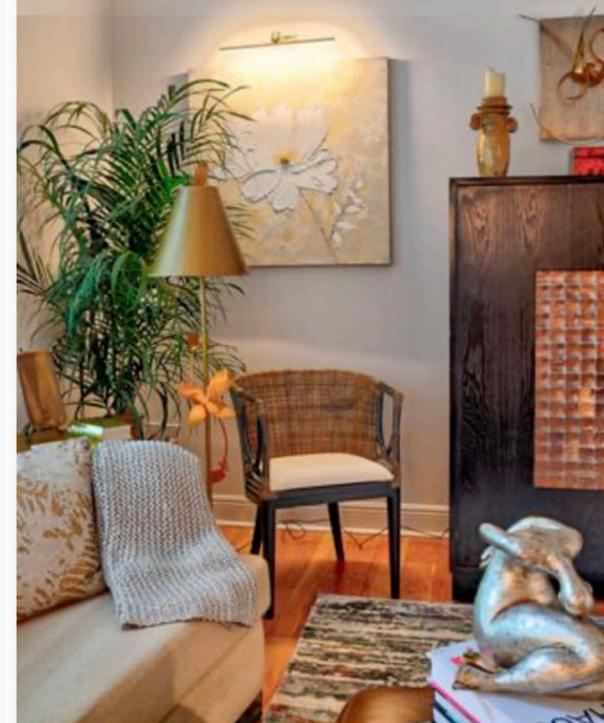
The neutral-themed master bedroom gets a pop of color from Brenda Breck's acrylic painting 'Slipping Away.'

Jeff Stroud



Asian influence carries over into this corner of the living area. The chrysanthemum painting is by Brenda Breck.

Jeff Stroud



Brenda Breck's striking image of a koi is titled 'What a Katch.'
Jeff Stroud

Finding their Sanctuary

Brenda Breck's art flows generously throughout the house. The female figure is a clear muse. The sunroom doubles as her studio, where the Brecks drink lemonade and coffee. The space is soothing. They sit in antique wicker chairs, one originally belonging to Bob Breck's father, the other his grandfather. Brenda Breck refinished them.

"The garden is my sanctuary, our sanctuary," said Bob Breck. "When you get older, you can appreciate so much more than when building a career. Waiting for a butterfly to show up can be an all-afternoon activity."

"Brenda has a yellow butterfly in one of her paintings. I said I had never seen a yellow butterfly before. The next day, one showed up in the garden. It's like paradise."

A career closer: Bob Breck's last day at work was March 2, 2016. "It was time for me to step aside and let the young ones have it. I am close to 80," said the trim man who could pass for 20 years younger, as could his polished wife.

The meteorological master's succinct advice regarding hurricanes: "Always track the center line. Just watch the center line. Keep your attention on the eyewall. If you fall outside of the eyewall, you'll be OK."

He also was succinct in describing his career. "I was one of the few people who knew what they wanted to do by the time they were 8. It's not a job when you love what you do. The truth is I have not really worked a day in my life."

One of Brenda Breck's abstracts hangs in a corner of the living room.
Jeff Stroud

