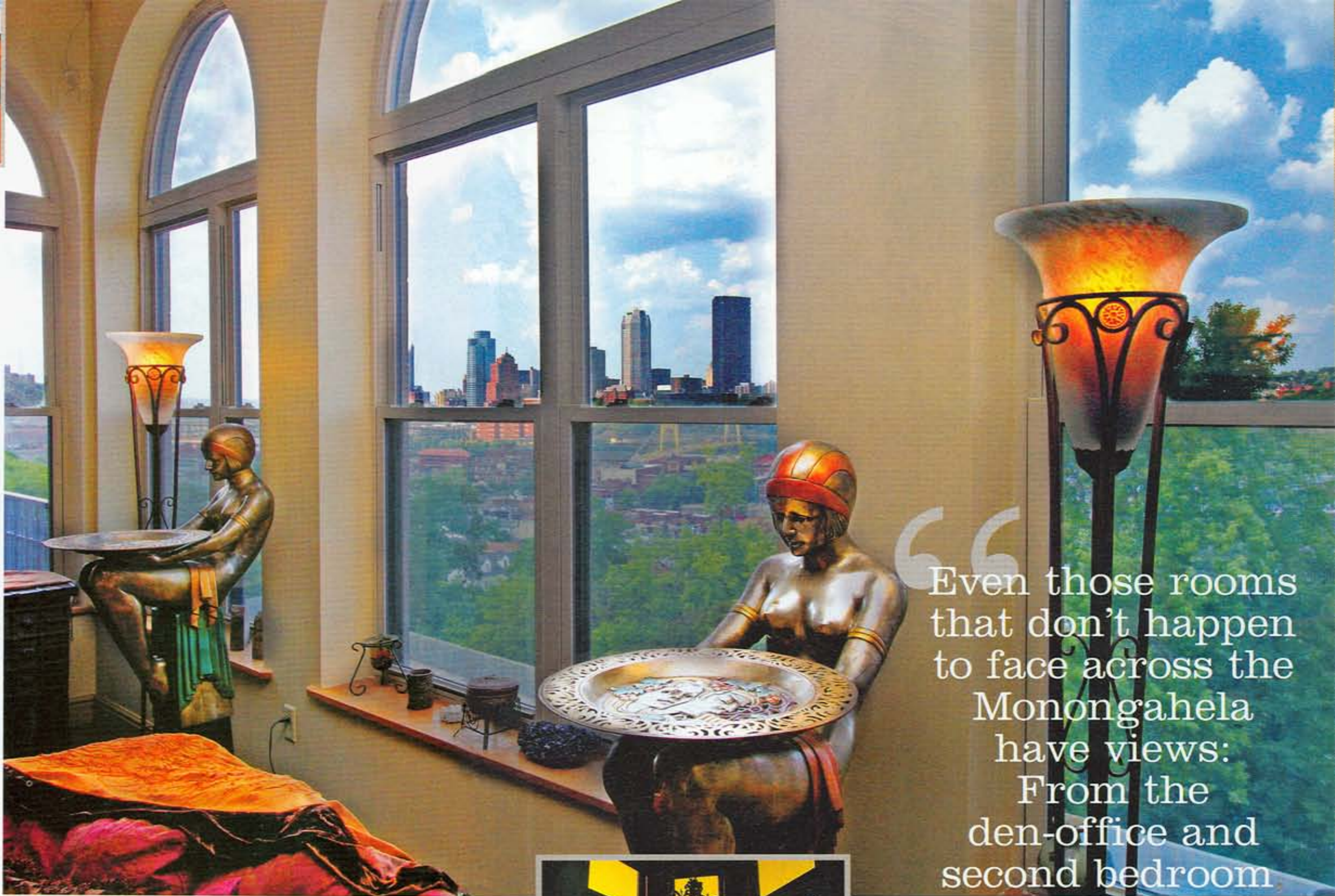




Blessed View

When Joedda McClain, an award-winning restoration contractor for Allegheny City Restorations, finally decided to plan a loft home of her own, she created a winner. With husband Jay Latterman, who has restored several homes himself, she laid out and designed the interior of a 2,200-square-foot, two-bedroom apartment in Angel's Arms, the unusual condo developed by Tom Tripoli in the former St. Michael the Archangel Catholic Church (built in 1861 and designed by architect Charles Bartberger) and rectory (built in 1890) on the South Side Slopes. The result is brilliant, both inside and out, so much so that it's hard to decide whether to look out the big living-room windows in the new connecting building between church and rectory, or to turn around and drink in the incredible decor and furnishings. McClain furnished the apartment with architectural artifacts from former projects, including a glass-windowed door etched "Rising Sun" mounted as a swing door to a totally ceramic-tiled bathroom with a 12-foot ceiling and a pair of art-deco statues from a Roman theater flanking the living-room window, just in case you were looking for the view. Oh yes, the view: It's wonderful, ranging from the University of Pittsburgh's Cathedral of Learning in Oakland to Trimont on Mount Washington, encompassing bridges from the West End to Brady Street, plus a vista on the South Side Flats. Angel's Arms itself has maintained many architectural details: Gold-trimmed columns poke out from walls, round brick smokestacks crown the roof. For some top-floor units, decks were made by cutting into the roof, so the roofline is maintained. "I tried to keep as much detail as possible," Tripoli says. In McClain and Latterman's apartment, a tiny bay window was transformed into a kitchen alcove with a built-in window seat and a marble table, inlaid with birds and bees. Their living-room floor is cement stained with organic materials—wine, coffee and crushed nuts—and polished. Even those rooms that don't happen to face across the Monongahela have views: from the den-office and second bedroom, you can see all the way to Squirrel Hill and Greenfield.

The couple also have turned their talents to running a turn-of-the-century Adirondack hotel, The Woods Inn, in Inlet, N.Y., which they restored in 2004. "We welcome Pittsburghers," McClain notes, "and we always look forward to our visits to Pittsburgh."



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