



ED BROWN PHOTOS

Cheryl Sarmiento visits with architect Richard Alexandar during the Junior League's Tour of Fine Spaces.

| Scene & Heard

FINE SPACES: Junior League's popular fundraiser goes beyond the kitchen this year

By Caroline Worf Long
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

On the first day of spring, there were open houses all over the city. But for those attending the Junior League of Winston-Salem's Tour of fine spaces, there was no pressure to



Caroline
WORF LONG

buy. There were eight houses on Saturday's tour, which included modern, new and refurbished houses. As the league's second largest fundraiser, the annual tour of Fine Kitchens expanded this year to include outdoor spaces, bedrooms, kitchens and bathrooms. It was renamed the tour of Fine Spaces. An extra touch was the presence of local restaurants within each home. Among the participants were Caffe Prada, Holly Tate Fine Catering and West End Café.

Local Interior Designers, cabinet makers, flooring specialist, architects and builders came together to present the showcase. The league partnered with the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina to "Get Fired up for Food" by encouraging tourgoers to bring donations of nonperishable items.

Over the past four years, the tour has raised more than \$100,000 with an average of 400 to 500 people coming each year.

Heather Jenkins, the committee chairwoman, spent months preparing for the tour. "It's great, especially in this economy, to showcase our local builders, and I think that people are maybe looking to renovate the homes they are now in, so this is a great option to see new ideas," she said.

Shoes came off as soon as you entered a home, and the atmosphere was jovial as the sun was shining and friends were meeting within each house.

The first stop was a recently rebuilt house. Modern in style, it fits the needs of the homeowners, complete with a music room instead of a formal dining room.

Richard Alexandar was the architect for the house. "This is a

great way for me to attract more business," he said. "Actually, from some of the advertising I have already gotten a call. It's a neat way for me to show others what I have to offer and for people to get some good ideas."



Jennifer Huber (left) and Kristin Smith were greeters at the tour house.

Katie Fowler, a Junior League member, was admiring the porch, which was angled towards the woods. "I was on the committee for this event last year, and it's really just a neat event. It has become a fun way to see other people's houses," she said.

Maureen Elrod was welcoming people. "We are just so grateful that people open up their homes to us and the rest of the community to see the work that has been done," she said. "It's a great way for us to raise money while showing all of the local talent that Winston-Salem has."

The next stop was a beautiful house on Buena Vista Road. Marie and Lucy Horn, who are sisters-in-law, were admiring the large island within the kitchen. "We love to see the houses, and it's a great way for us to be able to spend the day together," Lucy Horn said.

Martha McGarity and Karen Rickell were walking through the hallway and peeking in the many nooks and crannies of the large house. "This is actually our third year attending, so we come to look forward to this every year," McGarity said. "It's interesting how many heavy pieces of furniture are in this house, but that's the fun of it—you get to see things you

don't expect to see."

Becky Brown, the owner of Heavenly Cheesecakes by Becky, was displaying miniature versions of her confections in the vast kitchen. "This is my fourth year participating, and I've been lucky to be placed in the Buena Vista house each year. The Junior League does an amazing job putting this all together. And if I have to work on a Saturday instead of playing golf, then this is a pretty good deal," she said laughing.

Kelsey Bohon was in the upstairs master suite, which overlooks the pool. She is a design student and was interested in seeing how things are matched together. "This one is particularly interesting because they are using the concept of keeping the charm of an old home while mixing it with new elements," she said.

Gaye Price was with her, and added, "I love looking at all these homes seeing how they utilize their space. It's just a wonderful way to spend a Saturday."

One house along the way was a great example of what it is like to be in the middle of a renovation. The contractor said that they house has about 30 more days until completion. Owner Jane Oldham was in the living room. "Everyone is welcome to come walk through today. I've even left the paint cards out on the counter so they can help me choose the exact right color," she said.