

Wichitan helped decorate 'Trading Spaces'

■ Accent Interiors designer worked with Frank Bielec on an Oklahoma farmhouse.

BY ANNIE CALOVICH
The Wichita Eagle

When "Trading Spaces" decided to go to Manchester, Okla., to redesign the living room of a farmhouse, Wichita designer Vicki Flores got the call to shop for furniture and help decorate.

The result — "Trading Spaces: Town and Country" — airs at 8 tonight on TLC, cable Ch. 43.

"It was just a big party the entire time," said Flores, who worked with designer Frank Bielec from the show. "Everybody on the staff was really friendly. It was a good experience for everyone."



Courtesy photo

Vicki Flores and Frank Bielec

Flores is head of the design department at Accent Interiors and doesn't know how she was chosen to do the work on the house in Manchester, which is two hours away. Wichita is the closest big city, she said.

"I'm guessing they went through the phone book."

However they did it, Flores did the pre-shopping, visiting about five stores and taking gobs of digital photos so that when Bielec hit town in mid-April, he could select from what she'd picked out and stay within the \$2,000 budget for the living room.

"Frank carries his white envelope with furniture cash, accessories cash, carpentry cash," Flores said. "We ended up buying most of the furniture at Furniture on Consignment in Wichita. We bought accessories at my store and art supplies at Michael's."

Flores said she had not been aware of what a celebrity Bielec was.

Please see **TRADING**, Page 3C

TRADING

From Page 1C

"Everywhere we went there were people following him around. At Home Depot, people were standing around listening. A boy wanted his autograph at Furniture on Consignment."

This particular episode is a twist on the usual "trading spaces" involving people who know each other. This one involves a white-collar, professional couple from New York City trading spaces with a couple who farms in Oklahoma — the longest distance ever between two traded spaces.

Flores said the process went "really fast." Once the shopping was done, she headed to Oklahoma to help decorate.

Flores said the designers used what they thought the residents would like and kept with the spirit of the house and the farm. They took wood from the farm's original barn that had blown down in a tornado last year and used it to make an entertainment center, crown molding and a coffee table. Bielec made a wreath of barbed wire for the mantle.

The couple from New York, who lived in the farmhouse for a week while the redesign was being done, are graphic artists and were quite involved in the process, Flores said.

"Frank really used them in making selections. He has a way of guiding people. They framed some pictures. They

did hands-on work. They painted the walls."

Flores said that to a designer such as herself, "Trading Spaces" is one of those shows that doesn't always show the best design, "but this time, 'I thought it was very well done.'"

She said that while the New York couple and Oklahoma couple were trading spaces, the children of the Oklahoma couple dropped in on the decorating, and other relatives and neighbors visited as well.

"It was quite an experience for everyone."