

Community Spotlight

Local couple, artists, and business owners Josette Murphy and Jean-Louis Boudreau met and fell in love here in El Segundo and have been lending their combined talents to our community ever since. By Natalie Strong

Once upon a time on Grand, where Starbucks and Vinny's Pizza now sit, there was a row of small bungalows just perfect for the beginning of a love story. Though the bungalows are gone now, the love story continues...a story from which many El Segundo residents have benefited since its start.

The year is 2004. Josette Murphy, an Arizona State graduate, lives in and runs her interior design business out of her 400-square-foot bungalow. During the workday, Josette shares this small space with an assistant and the assistant's dog. The cramped conditions are becoming unbearable; tight quarters call for better organization, organization calls for shelving, and shelving requires a drill—and Josette doesn't have one. Her assistant runs out the back door to borrow a drill from the workshop across the alley, but returns empty-handed. Rather than lending a drill, the woodworkers are coming over to help build the shelves themselves.

Enter Jean-Louis Boudreau, our leading man. He's a local general contractor and gifted cabinet maker and woodworker who came to El Segundo from Montreal via San Francisco and Del Mar, travelling the continent Kerouac style. As the shelves are being hung, Murphy and Boudreau find themselves doing "the flirty thing with our eyes," according to Murphy, and it is clear to both that more excuses to interact must be invented. When one of Josette's clients requests custom tables for her



home, only Jean-Louis's craftsmanship will suffice. He undercharges her (a romantic gesture?) and completes the work in just a few days...and that's that. A working relationship has begun—or is it a romance? In this story, love and work are the chicken and the egg.

Now, in 2018, Josette and Jean-Louis have been married for 11 years, are parents to two daughters, and have worked together professionally ever since. When asked how they manage all that togetherness, Josette says, "We are highly compatible both creatively and romantically."

Josette's design firm, About Space Studios, and Jean-Louis's company, Boudreau Construction, have worked side-by-side to remodel many homes and businesses in El Segundo and surrounding areas, with extraordinary results. Clearly, the shared passion for making beautiful things and places is working for them.

Their unique love/work relationship is only part of the story,

though. Josette and Jean-Louis are also active within our community. Josette was a co-founder of the El Segundo Artwalk, for which she volunteered countless hours in the first two years of the event. She is also heavily involved in the Center Street School PTA, helping in the art department and now focusing on the Center Street Garden. Josette has co-chaired the elementary school Daddy/Daughter Dance for the past two years with Richmond Street School parent Sara Whelan. Josette has spoken at Career Day at ESHS, and About Space hires interns from the high school each summer.

Meanwhile, Jean-Louis was a Boy Scout Master for his now-grown son's troop, and has since helped more than a dozen Eagle candidates from our local scout house with their Eagle Scout projects by providing both his expertise in woodworking and use of his workshop, which is still across the alley from the former site of those fateful bungalows. Jean-Louis is also a familiar presence at El Segundo events, performing with his band, The Main Street Band.

Both of their businesses are generous donors to local fundraisers and auctions, several of which Josette has helped organize.

How they find time for it all is a mystery; however, this couple was undoubtedly made in El Segundo, by El Segundo, and for El Segundo. Thanks to their contributions, our community will always feel like home—a beautifully renovated but still familiar and welcoming home.