

STORIES & INSIGHTS

Rising Stars: Meet Chelle Ellis

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Today we'd like to introduce you to Chelle Ellis

Hi Chelle, can you start by introducing yourself? We'd love to learn more about how you got to where you are today?

Sadie's Old House at sadiesoldhouse.com is my renovation blog following our 1883 home, known locally as "Ms. Sadie's Place", and referred to by me as "Sadie".

Sadie was moved a mile South in 1942, so her original spot, along with the land of the 700 residents in the old valley of Coldwater, Mississippi, could be used in the Yazoo Basin Headwaters Project and developed into the Arkabutla Reservoir. Arkabutla Lake, its dam and spillway were ordered by Franklin D. Roosevelt and built by the WPA, in response to the Great Mississippi River Flood of 1927; moving the entire town of Coldwater, formerly established as The Village of Elm Grove for \$250,000.

Sadie arrived in 1942 at our address to be set atop a brand new basement in the new municipal of Coldwater, Mississippi, with improvements to make her the Colonial Revival Eclectic architectural style she is today. The Methodist church across the street from us was also moved then, and it is so massive, I can't imagine how they pulled that off. But they did.. and here we are.

My husband, Kenny, and I update our home renovation blog with improvements we make to the house and plans rolling around in the pipeline, to make Sadie her best self. We don't post videos because all that you would hear is a lot of cussing and bickering.. so the written word it is.

I have been a published writer for newspapers and magazines since 1990, so writing for the blog feeds my creative writing drive. I hope you will visit sadiesoldhouse.com and join our money pit existence, sharing our experiences that have yet to make us regret a day of our 25 years together.

Half a day, sure. 😊

Would you say it's been a smooth road, and if not what are some of the biggest challenges you've faced along the way?

A year and fifty articles into the blog, I lost all content one day in a disastrous website migration mishap. I took a year off, then rebuilt the lost entries during Covid 19 quarantine in 2020, and have been adding on as we tackle projects.

Currently, we are in the process of repainting Sadie ourselves. We think we are in possession of all our faculties, but still endeavor to take this on. Things were going pretty smoothly until Kenny recently hurt his back – so we are going a bit slower, waiting for him to heal until we can jump in at full throttle again. We will paint as much of the first floor as we can during this time, then assemble the scaffolding to reach all of Sadie, safely.

In 2007, I was diagnosed with relapsing remitting multiple sclerosis, and one of the biggest dangers for MS patients is heat and direct sunlight. But I am well acquainted with keeping myself free from MS attacks, so my big floppy hat and I will be clever and careful climbing the scaffolding to get Sadie all gussied up before the new year.





MOOSHPRINT STUDIO CREATED IN THE BACK YARD CARRIAGE HOUSE

Appreciate you sharing that. What else should we know about what you do?

I have always been creative: in studio art, writing and graphic design. I retired from a career in web development, but maintain a handful of pet projects to keep me fresh. My blog at sadiesoldhouse.com is one of those projects, and it allows me to document the changes we make to Sadie, which also motivates me to keep plugging away at seemingly endless renovations.

Kenny and I are currently in the middle of the massive task of repainting Sadie by ourselves and I am sure after we paint the last stroke, we will be more pleased with that accomplishment than most others. We are 53 and 63 years old, respectively, so safety is our main concern – as a fall could be fatal. Kenny spent this month attaching anchors and straps to the second floor front, so if we do fall, we should be caught. It will be slow going, because we are into heat of Summer now, so our work will be mostly 1 firm for over a decade, I worked on in-house and client websites and branding for two major newspapers, a magazine and a major US defense contractor.

I am a painter, printmaker and sculptor creating mixed media paintings with found or made objects added into the work. I often focus on simplified, repeated shapes with hidden questions and answers to the universe, making each piece unique to my style and meaningful to me. In this way, the process often feels larger than me and communal with everything, but my work space must have a certain flow to it to nurture a creative current. I built my art studio in the old carriage house in Sadie's backyard, and recently revamped everything. These changes hit all the marks, and are making this a very fruitful time for me artistically.

We all have a different way of looking at and defining success. How do you define success?

I am married to my best friend so life has been overall successful from that fact alone. We have been bickering about in projects now for 25 years, but the amount of time we spend standing back and staring at the results is a good litmus of how well things went. We certainly know we are capable, but to see it proven in real life creates a huge rush of pride and accomplishment.

We are a symbiotic DIY organism. It requires both of us to produce the results we crave.

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