

Warm Welcome

Blending a family's lively spirit with classic charm,
a new Houston home enchants passersby.

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Architecture: Robert Dame, Robert Dame Designs Interior Design: Jennifer Martinez, Jennifer Martinez Interiors
Home Builder: Andrew Evans, Parker-Evans Custom Builders

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eeing your home makes my commute better every day,” reads the handwritten note carefully tied to a potted plant left on the front doorstep of Houston designer Jennifer Martinez’s clients. Although it wasn’t the first or last time

the interior designer’s work received accolades, it is perhaps one of the most memorable. “Knowing my clients love their home is a great compliment in and of itself, but having a total stranger make such a grand gesture is icing on the cake,” Martinez says of the acclaim from an anonymous passerby.

The newly constructed abode was composed by Martinez as well as residential designer Robert Dame. “It was inspired by the shingle-style movement, which is considered to be among the first original American architectural styles with roots dating back to the late 19th century,” Dame describes. Defined by its swooping slate roof, deep porch, painted cedar siding and brick, the façade nestles into the surrounding mature plantings and massive oak trees to project a been-there-forever look. Inside, however, its easy flow, fresh color palette and modern furnishings exude the youthful spirit of the bustling family of five who live there. Handsome millwork and cased openings, signatures of Dame’s sophisticated style, allow the series of spacious rooms to feel cohesive yet distinct. Meanwhile, a combination of vaulted and coffered ceilings brings the spaces’ dramatic heights down to a cozy, more human scale.

To support the warm, welcoming ambience, Martinez turned to the Dmitri Koustov abstract oil painting—sourced by art advisor Liz Anders through Anya Tish Gallery—that now presides over the living room mantel. “We found this piece right after we installed Sheetrock,” the designer says. “In many ways, it drove some of our most important design decisions.” The painting’s vibrant blues, greens, corals and oranges appear in the fabrics and even paint colors that sew together the main living spaces. The resulting palette is bold and fun, infusing the house with an energy that keeps it from coming across as too serious or stuffy. It also helps bridge the gap

between the more classic architectural features and the contemporary finishes and decor. “You can see that in the juxtaposition between the clean, sharp lines of the plaster mantel and the loose swirls in the artwork,” notes Martinez, whose project managers were Jessica Broussard and Elizabeth Hogan.

In addition to such stylistic contrasts, a thoughtful blend of textures, colors and patterns permeates the interiors. Beginning in the entry, the exaggerated size of the graphic grass-cloth wallcovering reads as earthy and organic. This mélange continues into the adjacent living room, which features a leafy-green faceted side table; a pair of nubby, tweed-like teal chairs with ottomans; and a vintage coffee table made from burl wood and black-painted cane. Also visible from the entry, the study is clad in strong but smooth bleached white oak paneling installed by builder Andrew Evans. This space straddles rustic and refined thanks to its traditional dentil and crown molding mixed with a color scheme of rich blues, rusts and bronzes.

The dining room, on the other hand, is the epitome of plush. Its walls and ceiling are completely padded and upholstered using a whimsical floral linen in a blue and blush colorway, which was customized exclusively for the clients. The blue-lacquered trim and an antiqued gray finish on the Louis XVI-style chairs round out the mix. “Layers of texture and color appear everywhere, including some unexpected places,” Martinez says. Even a powder room has “wow” factor. Here, marbleized wallpaper and an entry door wrapped in black alligator-embossed leather and finished in a brass nailhead trim take the design to the next level. “So often, it’s the little details like these that make the biggest impact,” the designer notes.

Given that philosophy, it should come as no surprise that Martinez peppered the interior with a few more special features. Consider the laser-cut metal inserts on locker doors in the mudroom, Chippendale cabinet fronts in the bar area, and the lacquered Kelly-green pantry door and lemon-motif wallpaper in the kitchen. “The sky is the limit when you click with a client, and they are open to new ideas,” Martinez says. “You will create magic that even the neighbors can experience.”



A chandelier from Sourced by Janet Wiebe and walls wrapped in Schumacher’s Mrs. Howell print welcome guests in the entry. The Joseph Company covered the nearby living room’s chairs and ottomans in Pierre Frey’s Arsene linen from Culp Associates.

Above the custom-plastered living room mantel by Segreto Finishes hangs a Dmitri Koustov painting from Anya Tish Gallery. Highland House's Catbird chair from Found joins the coffee table from Shabby Slips Home.





Left: Farrow & Ball's Oval Room Blue coats the bar's cabinets. New Ravenna's Rattan mosaic tile backsplash from Ann Sacks and pulls from Elegant Additions complete the space. An Oushak rug found at Turkish Carpets, Inc. grounds the dining room beyond.

Opposite: The Joseph Company swathed the dining room in Textiles by Smith's Cherry Blossom linen from Supply Showroom. The chandelier from Susan Horne Antiques suspends above chairs from Joyce Horn Antiques, Ltd.





Above: Janus et Cie furnishings, studded with blue pillows from Perennials and custom ones in Brunswick & Fils' Les Touches print, bring indoor comfort to the outdoor living area. The grounds and pool were brought to life by landscape designer Steve Henry of Gregory/Henry Landscape Design and Installation.

Opposite: Custom white-steel windows by ACI Metalworks enclose the breakfast area. Below Pinch's Anders light from M.Naevie sit Modern History chairs found at Area wearing Isobel's Deco Stripe fabric from Supply Showroom.



Left: Lee Jofa's Taplow print backs a mirror from Brooke Drake and Murano-glass sconces from Sourced by Janet Wiebe in a powder room. THG Paris' faucet accents the Dover white marble counter from Pomogranit + ADR.

Opposite: Visual Comfort & Co.'s Carat pendant crowns a child's bedroom. Kravet draperies with a Samuel & Sons trim complement the floor covering from Venetian Blind Carpet One Floor & Home.

