

Viva La Glam

Striking art and style breathe
new life into a Houston family's residence.

WRITTEN BY MARGARET ZAINÉY ROUX | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JULIE SOEFER
STYLING BY JESSICA HOLTAM



Architecture: Jeremy McFarland, Alex Ridgway and Jimmy Chen, Brickmoon Design Interior Design: Caroline Finkelstein and Elisabeth McCabe, ecco design
Home Builder: Cooper Cogdell and Neal Nichols, Buster & Cogdell Builders, LLC

Wedding planning and home renovating have much more in common than one might realize. Both can trigger emotions of excitement and overwhelm. They can

both involve years of romanticized daydreaming and stringent planning. And, for the lucky, both can be the first step toward happily ever after. So, when a veteran wedding planner embarked on the renovation of her family's 1950s abode in Houston, she felt more than prepared to meet the challenge. "I took 20 years of experience in event design and applied it to home design," explains the owner. "There's a lot of crossover between the two worlds, particularly as it relates to the importance of personalization and detail. As with a wedding or event, the most memorable houses are those that reflect the hosts and their unique styles."

Residential designer Jeremy McFarland, with project architect Alex Ridgway and lead designer Jimmy Chen, joined designers Elisabeth McCabe and Caroline Finkelstein in helping the owner carry out her vision while also homing in on her aesthetic. With builders Cooper Cogdell and Neal Nichols, the team spent two years reimagining the residence, which sits on a coveted lot overlooking the idyllic Buffalo Bayou in the Memorial area. "We had countless conversations with our clients about the pros and cons of renovating versus rebuilding," recalls McCabe. "The house is beautifully positioned along the bayou, making us hesitant to start from scratch for fear of overbuilding and potentially losing what makes the property so special. Ultimately, we chose to work with what we had and conservatively add square footage as needed."

Prior to renovating, the family of four had lived in the house for a decade, making very few cosmetic changes. But as life evolved, so too did their wants and needs. "The circulation needed to be rethought to connect the different areas within the home," recalls McFarland. The husband had been working full time in a spacious but inconveniently located office directly in the center of the first floor amidst the inescapable hustle and bustle of family life. To cut down on distractions and increase the fluidity of foot traffic between the main living and entertaining spaces, a new office

was constructed above the garage and equipped with its own entry. The move not only provided a more productive work environment but also freed up extra space, with his former office converted into a swanky bar and lounge. Upstairs, a second lounge was designed exclusively for the teenage daughters, whose bedrooms were expanded. And, outside, "We significantly increased the amount of covered living space to promote outdoor entertaining while connecting all of the disjointed existing areas," explains McFarland. "The residence was truly transformed. It has changed how the family entertains and, more fundamentally, how they live day-to day."

Following the structural updates, the designers also implemented a festive refresh of the decor in the form of lively new hues, playful patterns and chic-yet-family-friendly furnishings in keeping with their clients' unique style. "They exude energy in every aspect of their lives, so we wanted the interiors to express their youthfulness and vibrancy," says Finkelstein. "We remained mindful, however, of the traditional architectural heritage of the house and, with the help of skilled artisans, paid our respects by restoring and recreating much of its original charm." The residence isn't tied too tightly to the past, but rather lightly tethered. The old-school, intricate detailing of the new moldings in the dining room and living room, for example, keeps the glam elements grounded and all the modern moments—lacquered paint finishes, sleek polished marble, graphic wall and floor coverings—in check. Meanwhile, clean-lined furnishings and overscale profiles lend sophistication to the punchy palette of coral and teal. Tempered by a handful of soft whites, grays and metallics, the vibrant tones complement the extensive collection of Mexican art the owners have acquired during time spent at their second home in Cabo San Lucas, Mexico.

"My style is greatly influenced by the life and work of Frida Kahlo and the overall feelings of warmth, comfort and whimsy that I draw from Mexican art and design," says the homeowner. "The saturated colors, rich textures and unexpected motifs depicted in the paintings, ceramics and textiles offer a nice departure from the architecture of our home. Compounded, they interweave and become uniquely self-expressive." ■



An abstract painting by Mary Quiros hangs above a vintage brass-and-glass console, which ecco design scored in Round Top. One of their favorite finds, it is prominently placed along this Houston abode's living room wall painted Benjamin Moore's Calm with molding coated in the brand's Sterling. The nearby entry features marble flooring by Daltile.

The designers executed a **refresh** featuring punchy hues, playful patterns and **chic-yet-family-friendly** furnishings.



Multiple seating zones create a sense of intimacy in the living room. A custom sofa in sumptuous dark gray S. Harris mohair joins Gabby chairs in a Lee Jofa pattern around a coffee table from the Jan Showers Collection. A banquette in Lee Jofa velvet, with throw pillows in Fortuny fabric, stretches across a wall adorned with antiqued-inset panels and Murano-glass palm sconces.



Right: Backed by mirrored wall panels, the lounge bar features custom shelves in polished brass and glass. Blue Louise quartzite countertops from Stone Source and a brass faucet from Fixtures & Fittings complete the vignette.

Opposite: Walls painted Benjamin Moore's Bermuda Turquoise set the scene for entertaining in the lounge. A portrait of Frida Kahlo overlooks custom Kravet-clad armchairs and a bespoke Yerra rug from Area. Vintage brass wall sconces from Thompson + Hanson Garden House complement an Adele chandelier from Visual Comfort & Co.





Above: Durable quartzite tops the kitchen's perimeter and island cabinetry, painted Benjamin Moore's Sterling and Cobblestone respectively. Rejuvenation cabinetry hardware complements the custom vent hood, faucet from Westheimer Plumbing & Hardware and Visual Comfort & Co. pendant lights. The window shade in a Studio Four NYC print from James Showroom punctuates the space.

Opposite: In the outdoor dining area, a classic shiplap ceiling nods to the home's architectural origins and serves as a counterpoint to contemporary accents like the blue tilework from Arizona Tile and a Julie Neill chandelier from Visual Comfort & Co.





Above: The sink's richly veined Rosso Luana marble from Stone Source inspired the formal powder bathroom. A Lee Jofa wallcovering and sconce lighting from Visual Comfort & Co., both Kelly Wearstler designs, complement a Vaughan chandelier from George Cameron Nash. The faucet is from Fixtures & Fittings.

Left: The guest bedroom serves as an oasis for family and friends, showcasing a petal-pink Phillip Jeffries wallcovering and Pindler armchair fabric. The Liz Marsh Designs lamp and bedding are from Tribute Goods.