

# Rooted *in* Tradition

Warm textures and millwork pair with pops of color and pattern in a new Houston home.

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Architecture: Rodney Stevens and Himanshu Madhani, Frankel Building Group Interior Design: Lauren Haskett, Lauren Haskett Design  
Home Builder: Scott Frankel and James Milford, Frankel Building Group

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ou can take the girl out of New Orleans, but you cannot take New Orleans out of the girl. With that sentiment in mind, designer Lauren Haskett began scheming a design plan marrying the old-school grandeur of her Houston client's birthplace with the modern

elegance of her adopted Texas hometown. "My client grew up in a city where century-old houses are the norm, so building from the ground up was new and exciting for her," recalls Haskett. "She was very hands-on throughout the process. As we gathered ideas and inspiration, I tapped into her vision for clean, contemporary interiors reflecting the youthful energy of her family while maintaining a close connection to the historic styles that make her feel at home."

But the design for this Tanglewood neighborhood abode evolved from more than a vision; it also grew from a *feeling*. According to the family's builder and friend Scott Frankel, the owners desired spaces that would be equally beautiful and livable, which his design-build firm's team—including project manager James Milford, concept designer Rodney Stevens and residential designer Himanshu Madhani—delivered in spades. "It has a more traditional setting in the front, and although the layout is modern and open, we used elements like ceiling treatments to define each space and French doors across the back to keep it feeling relaxed and not museum-like," describes Stevens. Notes the wife: "Our goal was comfortable elegance—a family home where nothing is 'untouchable' for children but still looks adult and beautiful."

While the Frankel team set its sights on function, Haskett and associate designer Laura Hoppe focused on form, seeking to satisfy the client's craving for classic character and fresh, clean lines. Haskett spent countless hours sketching and collaborating with craftsmen to design custom architectural elements including crown molding, baseboards and cabinetry that go with the flow of the layout and help delineate between the formal and informal spaces. "As the house progresses, the vibe relaxes," she explains. "Traditional features like built-in bookcases and wainscoted walls transition into rooms with rustic wood details and

steel-clad windows and doors." Case in point: the parlor makes a dramatic statement near the front entrance with its floor-to-ceiling shelves equipped with a rolling ladder, while just beyond in the living room, custom-made antique-looking wooden doors conceal storage and bring warmth and texture to both sides of the fireplace.

"You can even feel the mood change with the furniture," continues Haskett, whose selections include streamlined upholstery, case pieces and tables indicative of 21<sup>st</sup>-century style along with lacquered finishes, abstract art, overscale lamps and dramatic overhead lighting. But amidst the sleek surfaces and simple forms abound a handful of antiques bearing the kind of perfect imperfections only time can manufacture. An 18<sup>th</sup>-century Spanish console in the entry and a pair of Louis XVI-period bergère chairs in the parlor look smart but not stuffy in the presence of midcentury and contemporary styles. "I love that our home feels timeless, balancing the traditional in me from growing up in New Orleans, while incorporating modern touches throughout," adds the wife.

At her client's request, Haskett also enlisted a tonal palette of soft whites and neutrals to foster a sense of calm and cohesion throughout the rooms flooded with natural light and saturated with organic textures. Hardy white oak floors, limestone mantels, quartzite counters and heavy metal elements forged from iron and zinc anchor the towering 12-foot ceilings to a more human scale. On the softer side, neutral wool rugs, moss green mohair, woven rush and dove gray linens keep the clean spaces feeling warm. Meanwhile, glamorous accents shine in the form of the parlor's Italian Baroque gilded mirror and the dining room's six-light gilt chandelier.

"My client wasn't opposed to color but needed a nudge to embrace it," Haskett adds. "She loves blue, so I worked a few different hues into my initial presentation helping her to step out of her comfort zone." Rather than sticking with just one shade, the designer threaded several throughout the home—including deep Prussian for the media room and vivid peacock for the bar. After all, for a young family seeking old-meets-new style, says the designer, "variety was the name of the game." ■



Tumbled limestone pavers from Farmhouse Stone lead to the entry of this Houston home designed by Frankel Building Group. Precision Development applied a custom stucco finish in Sherwin-Williams' Greek Villa. A nod to the owner's New Orleans roots, French Quarter-style fixtures from Sheryl Stringer Gas Lanterns & Lighting flank the front door.



**Above:** Custom-made cypress doors frame the living room fireplace surround from Farmhouse Stone, complementing a Highland House Furniture coffee table. Oly Studio iron benches add a graphic punch. The art was found at Eneby Home in Round Top.

**Left:** Beyond the custom Danby marble entry table, the living room's skirted sofas and chairs are upholstered in fabrics by Perennials and Schumacher respectively. Grounded by a Carol Piper Rugs floor covering, the space also features vintage Lucite end tables scored in Round Top and lamps from Skelton-Culver-Steffen.



**Above:** The bar's Jim Thompson Fabrics wallcovering from Culp Associates complements custom cabinets by Benedettini Cabinetry painted Benjamin Moore's Stonecutter and topped with Negroresco granite from Omni Surfaces. Sconce lighting is The Urban Electric Co. and the Thomas O'Brien fixtures are from Visual Comfort.

**Opposite:** The breakfast room showcases dramatic steel-framed windows by Rehme Steel Windows & Doors. Chairs by Lemieux et Cie surround a pedestal table from RH with a six-light chandelier by Julie Neill centered above.



**Above:** A hub for the family on movie nights, the media room is painted Benjamin Moore's Blue Spruce, and its floor covering from Carol Piper Rugs and Zak+Fox draperies impart a cocoon-like atmosphere. Illuminated by a Lawson-Fenning chandelier, the RH sofa wears Perennials fabric below Christos J. Palios fine art photography.

**Opposite:** A Logan Ledford painting from Dimmitt Contemporary Art and a bench in bold Christopher Farr Cloth fabric energize a corner of the media room. The tulip table is from Rove Concepts.





**Above:** The powder room's Carnival Toile wallcovering by Palm Orleans honors the owner's Louisiana heritage, as do sconces by New Orleans lighting designer Julie Neill. A honed Calacatta Caldia marble counter from Omni Surfaces pairs with a Newport Brass faucet.

**Left:** In a child's bedroom, Voutsas wallpaper from Supply Showroom wraps the ceiling above a Caitlin Wilson Design canopy bed. Reading destinations include a window seat adorned with a star pendant by E.F. Chapman for Visual Comfort and a Zak+Fox shade from Culp Associates, as well as a custom lacquered desk from The CEH.