

Fresh Perspectives

In Houston, design talents create a family home with a youthful twist.

WRITTEN BY MAILLE PINGEL | PHOTOGRAPHY BY KERRY KIRK | STYLING BY BECKI GRIFFIN



Architecture: Robert Dame, Robert Dame Designs Interior Design: Shannon Crain, Shannon Crain Design
Home Builder: D.J. Palmore, David James Custom Builder

While the owners of this home in Houston's West University area considered the locale idyllic for their young family and envisioned settling down there, the couple also wanted a one-of-a-kind residence—something a little different and with a youthful energy. To achieve this, they decided to move forward with a new build, tapping a talented team of design professionals whose fresh ideas could help bring their distinctive family abode to life. "I know from experience that up-and-comers who have made their bones but are still young, hungry and ready to take it to the next level will meet good opportunities with their best stuff," explains the husband. "I also knew that working with our contemporaries would bring the right energy to the project and keep it fun."

Everything fell into place when the clients first toured a house by builder D.J. Palmore. "I liked his warm and inviting style," recalls the wife, "and we knew he would hold our hands throughout the process." As a boutique builder, Palmore prides himself on having a unique approach. "I'm heavily involved in the design and I'm another set of creative eyes on a project," he notes. With an outline of ideas for a flexible interior that could grow with the family, Palmore asked residential designer Robert Dame to develop a contemporary gabled design with the goal of saving as many existing trees as possible. And to help with the interiors, Palmore and the owners turned to designer Shannon Crain. From their first project meeting, Palmore and Crain just clicked. "She has a feminine vibe and I'm more masculine, so we knew we'd play well off each other," explains Palmore. For Crain, their close collaboration was refreshing. "D.J. and I haven't branded ourselves, and we were genuinely curious as to what the other had to say," she adds.

To balance their masculine and feminine aesthetics, as well as those of the owners, the design duo defined their roles with Palmore focusing on architectural elements and natural features like wood and marble, and Crain

concentrating her attention on furnishings that would instill color, allure and texture. They also looked to personal favorites such as Bobby McAlpine, Barbara Barry and Suzanne Kasler for inspiration. "I like mixing modern forms with rustic finishes like hand-troweled stucco as well as juxtaposing old and new," Palmore notes. "While this house isn't trendy, it has so many cool aspects," he continues, pointing to a full-radius brick archway designed to create a cozy seating area. The arch wasn't included in the original plans, and that is precisely the kind of spontaneity that made this project sing.

From the beginning, the team knew the interiors would be dynamic. "She wanted soft, delicate and polished," recalls Crain, who responded to that directive with curved lines used to dramatic effect, bringing in pieces like the breakfast area's klismos chairs. Crain also chose a palette of dusty blues, rose and purples—all of which are especially flattering on the wife. The family room, at the heart of the home, melds the entire palette, with Crain carrying select colors in varying tones throughout the rest of the residence and adding bold artworks to define each space. "I wanted abstracts that could hold their own," she says. Above the striking family room fireplace, an equally strong painting by Sydney Yeager proved just the answer. For the dining room, showcasing a subdued iteration of the palette, Crain commissioned a work by Logan Ledford. And, for the husband's office, coated in a steely gray paint, she found a Randal Ford animal portrait of a black wolf. "The husband liked its intensity," Crain notes. Upstairs, the couple's bedroom is awash in pale blues. "It all simply came together—soft and feminine but not girly," describes the wife.

"When you design a custom home, it fits like a glove," explains the husband, noting the glazed rear façade and wooded view remind him of primordial Sherwood Forest. "It lives like a mansion with lots of separate areas, but it's an urban home on a quarter-acre lot." Builder and designer are equally pleased with the result. "The owners wanted something different and pushed us," says Palmore. To that, Crain adds, "We brought a fresh perspective and just wanted them to love their house." ■



Ostrich vinyl from Pindler for the seat cushion and a Rebecca Atwood wallpaper from James join artwork from Natural Curiosities in creating a soothing mudroom.

The couple wanted a **unique residence**—something a little different and **with a youthful energy**.



A brick archway defines a seating area, where draperies from The Shade Store frame a Circa Lighting chandelier above Lee chairs and an Arteriors coffee table. Wood floors from Custom Floors Unlimited and Sherwin-Williams Worldly Gray, cut to an even more subtle shade, fill the primary living spaces.

Filling the cozy family room are a Highland House sofa, Hickory Chair armchair with Schumacher upholstery, a tufted bench from Oly and a round Bernhardt table from Ladco Design Center, all atop a floor covering from Madison Lily Rugs. The lamp is Visual Comfort & Co.





Left: The kitchen island is the family hub with Lawson-Fenning barstools and pendants from Circa Lighting. Espitia's Cabinet Door Makers fabricated the cabinet doors, which interplay with marble countertops from Omni Surfaces and backsplash tile from Ann Sacks.

Opposite: In the breakfast area, a plaster-finish table with a reeded edge and Noir klismos chairs infuse a mix of textures and feminine lines.





Above: Ann Sacks tile flooring, a Circa Lighting sconce and a tub and faucets from Acero Bella form a luxurious and monochromatic main bathroom.

Opposite: The main bedroom's custom bed is covered in Schumacher velvet and topped with linens from Kuhl-Linscomb and a Holland & Sherry duvet and pillow print. Above are a mirror from Bliss Home and an Arteriors chandelier; below is a rug from The Barbara Barry Collection. The draperies are Rogers & Goffigon.